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12

はなとらと
魔王さま



はにろく魔いぞろ

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魔王・フラッシュバックに悩む



芦屋が買い物から帰宅するときに、
は不意な光景が広がっていた。
部屋の真ん中で、真奥が洗い顔で降り
ながら悩んでいる。
揺らしているのは真奥のシャツの肩を
全力で擦過するアシエで、普段の真
奥なには「やかましー」の声とともに
拳骨を飛ばす場面だが、このときに限っ
てはただひたすらアシエに描きまされ
るがままに任せていた。
「何をし、おいでなのですか？ それ
は？」
芦屋は描きまされている真奥の目の前に
置かれている、ハードカバーの小説を二
冊重ねたほどの見慣れないサイズの箱に
気づいた。
「携帯電話」
真奥の返答は簡潔で、芦屋はすぐに理
解した。
分かっていくパッケージだが、よく見
れば真奥の目の前に置かれているのは

確かに真新しい携帯電話の箱だった。
「ああ。そう言えばエミリアに金を出さ
せてお買い求めになられたのでしたね。
今日行かれたのでしたか」
「ああ」
「……魔王様？」
真奥の返答がどこか心こにあってと
言った様子で、芦屋は眉を皺める。
大体この会話の間、アシエがずっと
真奥を描きまがり続けているのである。
「……」
「なんか、帰って来たらさっさとそんな
感じ」
真奥の代わりに、振り返りもせずに漆
原が言った。
「アシエは何をしている。魔王様の御
召し物が型崩れする。やめろ」
「交渉だヨ」
アシエは真奥を描きまがり続けながら叫
んだ。
「マオウは携帯買ってくれるって確かに
言ッた！ スズノとアルバートが証人
だ！」

「例え話だよ。買うとは言ってねえ」
「……」
アシエが真奥から携帯電話を買って
もらったと画策していることは芦屋も知
っていたが、どうも今の口調から察す
に真奥の憂鬱の根源はアシエではない
ようだ。
「何か、買うにあたってエミリアから無
理難題でも？」
「いや。ぶっ壊れた前の携帯から、メー
ルと電話帳とかコピーする交渉しな
れただけ」
「あ、あんなぐちゃぐちゃの状態デー
タ吸い出せたよね」
漆原が感心したように言い、芦屋は恵
美が真奥に世話を焼いたという事実が軽
く驚く。
「では、何か操作方法が難しいとか」
「いや、どうせ電話とメールしかない
し」
「ではどうされたのですか」
「……いやあ」
真奥はぼんやりと、携帯電話の箱から
ナイフ？
「アシエに言われたくないよ」
「アシエに言われる自分の身の上を恥
じ」
「まあ、こればかりは魔王様のお心づ
き」
「あ……やっぱもった他の物にとき
きよかつたかな……って言うかそそも
携帯電話とか初めから恵美の頭からね
えか……」
頭を抱えてしまった真奥の悩みを解決
する術を持たない芦屋は、話を切り上げ
て夕食の準備のために冷蔵庫を開けよう
とし、
「……携帯電話か。そう言えば、随分間
が空いてしまったな」
ふと、少し前に人と交わした些細な口
約束を思い出したのだった。

てくれて、そりや正当な報酬だってのは
お互い分かっているはすだけ、ほら、こ
ないだのちーちゃんと恵美の誕生日パーテ
イのあれさ、旅の間にあんま深く考え
ずに買って、しかもそんな高いもんじゃ
ないし、こ何というか、使うのがさ
……」
「後めたい、と？」
「いやそーいうんでもないんだけど、よ
く分かんねえんだよ。ただこの携帯を手
に入れたまでのことと恵美は切り離せね
えし、携帯電話持たないってわけにも
いかないし、なんかこう常に恵美に見張
られてるような気がして落ち着かなく
て」
「考えすぎではありませんか」
「……なごねえよ。お前だって誰かに
高い物買わせたらそなるって」
「正当な報酬ならは。私は気に入りました
せ」
「例え気にしないよ」
「ルシフェルは気に入った方がいいじゃ



Short Story 1: Demon King, Feeling Troubled because Memories were Brought Back

Once Ashiya returned home after having bought things, he saw a strange scene.

In the middle of the room, Maou was groaning with an unhappy look on his face, while his body was being shook back and forth.

And the one shaking Maou's body was Acies. She was grabbing his shoulders with force, and there was a shirt between her hands and his shoulders. If it were the normal Maou, he would already have shouted 'So noisy' while hitting Acies with an iron fist as punishment at the same time, but just this time, Maou allowed Acies to continuously shake his body.

"May I know what you're doing? This is?"

In front of Maou who was being shaken, Ashiya discovered a box of a size which was not commonly seen, about the size of two deluxe edition novels stacked on top of one another.

"Mobile phone."

Ashiya immediately understood Maou's simple answer.

Although the packaging was not obvious, looking at it carefully, what was placed in front of Maou was a brand new mobile phone box.

“Ah. Then again, you did say before that you wanted Emilia to pay for a new mobile phone. So you went to buy it today?”

“Yeah.”

“.....Demon King-sama?”

Noticing that Maou was replying in a rather distracted manner, Ashiya frowned.

By the way, as the both of them were talking, Acies was still shaking Maou.

“.....”

“He has been like this ever since he returned home.”

Urushihara spoke up for Maou without even turning around.

“Acies. What are you doing? You’ll cause Demon King-sama’s shirt to deform doing that. Stop it.”

“I am negotiating!”

Acies continued to shake Maou while shouting at the same time, “Maou said before that he would buy a mobile phone for me. Suzuno and Alberto are the witnesses.”

“That was just an example. I’ve never said that I will buy one for you.”

“Damn it!”

Ashiya knew that Acies kept planning to make Maou buy her a mobile phone, but from the tone of his voice just now, it seemed that the source of his worries was not Acies.

“Did Emilia make any unreasonable requests when buying the mobile phone?”

“No. I just let her help me negotiate with the shop staff to think of ways to transfer email addresses and phone contacts from the old phone to the new one.”

“It is already in this kind of state, so there are still ways to extract the data huh,” Urushihara said in admiration. As for Ashiya, he felt rather surprised about Emi helping Maou.

“Then, is it difficult to use?”

“No, I only use it to make calls and send messages anyway.”

“Then what is the matter?”

“.....Sigh.”

Maou took out the mobile phone from the box in a distracted manner.

It was a simply designed silver phone. It looked more trendy than the arc shaped mobile phone which Maou used in the past.

Looking at the brand new shell, where the protective plastic sheet had not even been peeled off, Maou frowned.

“A mobile phone is expensive, right?”

“Yeah, it is rather expensive.”

“And, it would normally be used for a long time, an irreplaceable object of day to day living in the modern age.”

“I’m fine with not having one, but for people with jobs, it would be like that. May I know what this is about?”

“Whenever I hold it, it would appear.”

“What would appear?”

“Emi’s face.”

“Emilia’s face..... eh?”

The unexpected answer caused Ashiya to blink his eyes repeatedly in surprise, and Maou started to talk a lot like the dam had broken, “Not only did it feel like I forced her to buy an expensive thing for me by using her weak point, she even helped me a lot in the store. Although both of us knew that it was a justified reward, the presents I had given Chi-chan and Emi on their birthday were souvenirs I bought during the journey without thinking too much about it, and it’s nothing that expensive, how should I say it, every time I use it.....”

“You would feel a sense of guilt?”

“Uh, it’s not to that point yet. It’s just that the process of getting this mobile phone cannot be completely separated from Emi, and it’s not like I can’t not bring my mobile phone with me, so it feels like I am constantly being watched by Emi, so I can’t calm down at all.”

“You’re probably thinking too much into it, aren’t you?”

“I don’t think so. If someone bought you something very expensive, you’d probably feel that way as well.”

“As long as it’s a justified reward, I will not be bothered by it.”

“I won’t be bothered by it either.”

“It would be better for Lucifer to be more bothered by it, yes?”

“You’re the last person I want to hear that from, Acies!”

“You should feel ashamed of the situation, where you were actually told this by Acies.”

After lecturing Urushihara loudly, Ashiya lightly sighed.

“Sigh, since it’s a matter of Demon King-sama’s personal feelings, I’m afraid I can only ask you to slowly get used to it.”

“Ah..... if I had known this earlier, I would have chosen other things. Mobile phones were Emi’s forte from the start.....”

Ashiya, unable to help Maou solve the problem, ended the topic and opened the fridge in order to prepare dinner.

“.....Mobile phone, huh. Then again, it seems like a rather long time has passed.”

Ashiya suddenly remembered the small agreement he had with a certain person.

魔王、出勤中に転ぶ



その日の関東地方平野部は、十一月としては記録的な大雪であった。なんと三センチもの積雪で都内各所ではスリップ事故が多発し、鉄道網にも混乱が発生。

「魔王様は歩いて通勤されたにもかかわらず、あわや転倒されそうになったそうだ。」

「へ……」

「ヘルも共用階段から滑り落ちそうになったと言うし。」

「へ……」

「天鈴さんは近所の子供に雪玉をぶつけられたとか。」

「それはちよつと面白けれど……」

「芦屋と漆原はその混乱の巷を、道々にやめた水たまりをよけながらこく普通歩いていた。」

「大雪、積雪とは言うものの、それは関東地方の十一月にしては、という話であり、空からはらばらと霽のような雪が舞い落ち、足元の雪はシャーベツト状となって地面を露出させ茶色く濁っている。」

「……ついでに今日買いに行こうよ。」

「夏服重ね着て手を打て。」

「打てるか！ 袖はどこから生み出すのさ！」

「貴様が働いて生み出してもいいんだぞ。」

「じゃあいいよ。毎日真奥が芦屋のやつ適当に借りるから。」

「やめんか！ 魔王様の冬の御召し物には厳密なロケーションがあるのだ！ それを崩されれば魔王様が外に出られなくなる。」

「だから僕の冬服買いに行こうって言うてるだろ！ 別にブランド物買えとか言ってるわけじゃないし、僕外出ないからデザインとかもどうでもいいよ。銭湯の行き帰りに凍死しない程度でいいから。」

「妥協をしているようで、結局のところ真奥の稼ぎにたかろうとしている漆原に、芦屋はやるかたないものを感じてる。」

「値段や品質云々でなく、漆原に新品の衣類を買い与えることすら腹立たしい。」

「押し入れのアレ使えば、そんなこともなくなるんじゃないの？」

「使えば貴様は働くのか？」

「ないね。」

「なら今のままでいい！」

「シャーベツト状の雪を蹴散らしつつぎやあぎやあと定番の言い合いをしながらも、二人の足は笹塚駅前のユニンロへと向かっているのだ。」



Short Story 2: Demon King, Falling Down on the Way to Work

That day, the plains of Kanto brought over a heavy bout of rare November snow.

The accumulated snow, three centimeters thick, caused a lot of slipping accidents within the city, and even the railway network fell into chaos.

“Even though Demon King-sama walks to work, he still almost fell down.”

“Oh.....”

“Bell also said that she almost fell down the common staircase.”

“Oh.....”

“As for Amane-san, the children living nearby threw snowballs at her.”

“That’s actually a little interesting.....”

In the chaotic streets, Ashiya and Urushihara walked normally while avoiding the puddles.

Even if heavy and accumulated snow were mentioned, it still happened in November within the city, the snow falling from the sky contained rainwater, and the snow next to their feet was half melted and showed the surface beneath it, which was a mixed brown colour.

Anyways, it was just a whole day of snow which came out of season and created chaos for the citizens of the Kanto region.

“Why is it that even I have to go out to help buy things on a day like this of all days. It’s not as if a disaster really happened.”

“Today just happened to overlap with the day where a lot of things needed to be bought. If I rode a bicycle, I might fall down due to bad road conditions. At such times, what’s wrong with using the walking organism who normally lazily stays at home?”

“Can you not make it sound like I’m a small helper robot?”

“If it’s a robot, it would be more obedient right? Luckily, there is no need to shovel snow from in front of the apartment and the road outside. Just bear with this kind of small thing.”

“Ah~ seriously~ thinking about it carefully, I don’t have my own winter clothes at all. This feather down jacket and hat is what Maou wore last year right? It was only taken out because of the sudden snow, it’s covered in the smell of mothballs..... let’s take the chance to buy them today.”

“It would be enough for you to wear a few layers of summer clothing right.”

“How would it be enough! Where am I supposed to grow the sleeves from!”

“You can grow them by finding your own work.”

“Then forget it. I will just borrow Maou’s and Ashiya’s ones whenever.”

“Don’t do that! Demon King-sama’s winter clothes are cycled in a strict order! If the order is messed up, Demon King-sama would be unable to leave the house!”

“That’s why I suggested buying my winter clothes! I’m not asking you to buy branded goods, I don’t normally go out anyway, and any design is fine. As long as I don’t freeze to death on the way back from the baths.”

Although Lucifer seemed to compromise, he still wanted to suck up Maou’s salary, this made Ashiya indignant.

“Not considering price and quality, just thinking about having to buy Urushihara new clothes makes me mad.”

“As long as you use that in the closet, you won’t have to worry about this kind of thing, right?”

“Would you work if I used that?”

“I guess not.”

“Then let’s stick to the current situation!”

Even if they bickered with each other like usual while kicking at the half melted snow, both their footsteps still slowly walked towards the UNIXLO in front of Sasazuka station.

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はなからく魔界ま

Chapter 1: Demon King, Sticking to a Normal Life

魔王、普通の生活を堅持する。



A home one is used to living in provides an irreplaceable sense of safety.

For example, when travelling, no matter how great the hotels stayed in during the trip were, once a person returned to their own messy home after the trip, a feeling of loneliness and a strange sense of safety will mysteriously surface at the same time.

However—

“What is this!”

His situation was—

“Those are demonic magic blocks belonging to Demon King-sama and me. Because they can’t be kept elsewhere.”

Although he thought he was only leaving the house temporarily—

“Huh? Demonic magic blocks? Isn’t this too dumb? Are the both of you idiots?”

“Returning after a long time away, why are you using this tone once you come back.”

“That’s obvious! To want to rebuke strongly about this, I can’t be the only one right?”

Unexpectedly, the ‘territory’ which he was used to staying in was occupied.

Urushihara Hanzo, who was released from the long hospital stay, managed to return to Room 201 of Villa Rosa Sasazuka, and after much difficulty, discovered that ‘his own room’ — the top level of the closet, was covered in newspaper and raffia string, being occupied by a mysterious object which looked like a huge Yokan while being strangely soft, causing him to become momentarily speechless.

(T/N: Yōkan is a thick, jellied dessert made of red bean paste, agar, and sugar.)

From Urushihara’s point of view, being forcefully admitted into hospital, not only was he unable to leave the hospital ward where he was being watched, when he was finally able to go home, he discovered that his own room had been sealed up.

And what occupied his room was demonic magic known as the source of their life energy.

Before this, not just Urushihara, even Ashiya Shiro who completely ignored Urushihara’s complaints and snapped back in return, and their master, also

known as the owner of this apartment Maou Sadao, were all forced to live restricted lives in Japan which completely did not resemble that of demons because they lacked this demonic magic.

However, the amount of demonic energy which was placed in the closet right now, even if it was just a rough estimation, it may be enough to match up to that of Demon King Satan when he was at his full power.

With things as they are now, Urushihara also knew that Maou and Ashiya did not plan to use demonic magic and violence to conquer Japan.

Even so, he still did not understand why the both of them would leave such an enormous amount of 'energy' untouched, and had the attitude of planning to continue living the same way as before.

“Ashiya, have you not thought of using these things efficiently? Even if they are a resource line, there will be no value just leaving them there you know?”

“You have no right to teach me about money. Just treat this as savings for the future.”

“Do you plan to draw your savings little by little to spend your days after you grow old? Ashiya, do you have no ambition at all? Have you ever considered using it to improve your living conditions at least?”

Urushihara kept advocating this with all this might, and Ashiya asked in return like he was truly surprised.

“Improve living conditions? What do you mean by that?”

“What do I mean.....”

Not expecting to be asked this in return, being overly surprised, Urushihara was momentarily unable to say anything.

“Uh, erhm, what I mean is.....”

Urushihara opened the closet and looked around the room.

“T, that’s right, food expenses! Demonic magic is our life energy right! Since we have so much demonic magic right now, we don’t have to eat anymore right?”

Urushihara, who rushed to the fridge and opened it as he said this, discovered meat, vegetables, fish, milk, tofu, natto, and various condiments placed within it as usual, he was very clear that this was Ashiya’s normal fixed allocation.

“Eating is the basic part of living. Thanks to Demon King-sama going out to work, we have the leisure of being able to have a life of getting three meals a day. There is no need to carelessly use up demonic magic.”

“Being unable to point out what is strange in what Ashiya said in one sentence is frustrating!”

Urushihara slammed the fridge door shut.

“T-then stuff like electricity, water, and gas - we don't have to use these anymore right?”

“Is there any way to start up the microwave with demonic magic?”

“How is that not possible, you're a Demon General right?”

“Japan's electronics use AC sources, so it would work as long as we use demonic magic to produce that kind of lightning attack. But compared to lightning attacks, the electric power consumed is very weak. To us, it should require very difficult fine adjustments, right?”

“Ugh..... t, then.....”

Urushihara, who was lacking in words once again, spread his arms as if he suddenly thought of something.

“In the first place, there is this room! Since we have already regained our demonic magic, then there is no need for us to follow human laws right? I won’t say anything about using violent methods, but we could at least control humans and leave this rundown apartment and move to an apartment where one person can have one room, and has a larger kitchen and a separate bathroom right?”

“If it was the me from one year ago, I might have thought about similar things.”

“.....No, erhm, even if you did have the same thoughts, I would sigh with the feeling that your ambition is really too small for a Demon General like you.”

Talking about one year ago, it would be the period of time when Ashiya did not have any interactions with the people around him.

Once he thought about Ashiya Shiro – Demon General Alsiel already thinking about moving to an apartment with a larger kitchen and a separate bathroom before he developed any attachment to Japan and humans, Urushihara started to feel melancholy.....

“But the current us, we do not have any special reasons to move away from this apartment.”

“Why? Although you are frequently complaining about the facilities here!”

Urushihara had wanted to suggest using the demonic magic to do more demon-like things, but the topic had somehow shifted to how to use demonic magic to create a more comfortable living environment.

“Of course, I wish for the cooking area to be wider, this kitchen is too low for my height. If there was a balcony, it would be more convenient when leaving clothes to dry. When Sasaki-san comes to visit, it is not good to hang men’s underwear in a place which can be seen. However, the height of the kitchen is not a fatal obstacle, the laundry matters can also be solved with some ingenuity.”

“I say.....”

“And even if we need to move house, where do you plan to move to? Think about it, we have already built up a lot of geographical relationship with this land in Sasazuka, this place has all the factors we need for our daily living. In addition, with regards to the ‘neighbours’ of the apartment, Bell is next door, Nord Justina is downstairs. To have all tenants in the congregated housing understand each other’s situation is something which is difficult to find. In addition, we basically have a hostile relationship with each other, so we don’t have to care so much about interaction between neighbours. Just thinking

about how to conceal your existence to the neighbours over there once we move to a new apartment already makes me feel melancholy.”

“Apologise to all the NEETs in Japan!”

“I don’t feel that there is a need to apologise at all,” Ashiya answered scornfully.

“And once we move, we need to settle the paperwork for the water, electricity, gas, and the television, and we still have to hire a moving company. The Resident Card records need to be changed as well, then there are the bank and credit card procedures.....”

“That’s enoughhhhhh! Like I said, we can settle everything with demonic magic!”

Ashiya listed out the reasons for not improving their living conditions non-stop, and Urushihara started to protest like he could not take it anymore, but Ashiya answered, completely undeterred.

“Even if we do not use demonic magic, it will not cause any obstruction to our daily lives, why don’t you understand that?”

“In the first place, you should be doubting the pre-condition ‘needing to maintain our current lifestyle!’”

“What are you talking about?”

Ashiya, like he felt completely surprised, pointed towards the closet, no, the neighbouring room.

“If we start to go against the rules of Japan or even this world, do you think that person will let us off?”

At this moment—

“As expected of Ashiya-san, you’re very sensible.”

Ignoring the fact that it was locked, the porch door of room 201 automatically opened instantly.

"She appearrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrreeeeeeeeeee dddddddddd?"

The dim sunlight shining in from the public corridor suddenly turned as holy as the light of Buddha, the visitor standing there was wearing a dark red wide brim hat with the feather of a Bird of Paradise stuck on it, dark red enamel high heels matched it a dark red flared skirt. That person wearing a knitted sweater which should appear loose but ended up being stretched tight, was

the landlady of Villa Rosa Sasazuka, Shiba Miki, who was dressed in a more casual manner than usual.

“I am not complying with the logic of humans, but hoping to maintain my rationality.”

“Such admirable mental preparation. Urushihara-san should strive to not say too reckless things as well.”

“Mo- moving house shouldn’t be considered an action that is too reckless, right?”

Urushihara moved next to the window in order to keep as far away from Shiba as possible, but it seemed like he was unable to escape Shiba’s influence.

Urushihara’s purple coloured hair slowly became faint, and a few second later, it settled on silver with a blue tinge.

“Wahhh, the colour changed again! Just let me off already!”

“Sigh, don’t be like that, doesn’t this suit you very well? It has a feeling of boldly changing your image.”

“Shut up! Why are you leisurely sticking together with the Landlady!”

The person who teased about Urushihara’s hair changing colour in a half-joking manner was obviously not Ashiya or the landlady.

It was a man standing next to the landlady who was about as tall as Ashiya.

His hair colour was silver with a blue tinge just like the current Urushihara.

Although it was already late autumn, the young man who was still wearing his usual short sleeved ‘I LOVE LA’ t-shirt under his long robes, shrugged and replied, “Since Mi-chan is going out, I naturally have to help her with the luggage because I have remained under her care.”

“Aren’t you too comfortable with your current self!”

It seems like the title of Guardian Angel of the Tree of Life was in the past.

Archangel Gabriel did not seem to resist the idea of being demoted to being Shiba’s luggage boy.

“Ah, Crestia Bell said ever since you stuffed the demonic magic blocks into the closet, the soundproofing effect had improved, so I hope that you can continue to do so.”

“Why is everyone like this, I had enoughhhhhhhh!”

This time, Urushihara finally grabbed his own head, and shouted loudly in an unrestrained manner.

Ashiya’s ignored Urushihara’s troubles and asked Gabriel,

“I did hear that Landlady-san wants to see Bell, but I did not hear that you were coming along. What business do you have with Bell?”

“Hm~ it’s like what I said just now, I’m really just helping Mi-chan carry her luggage.”

Just like Gabriel said, his stout arm was holding a dark red crocodile skin handbag.

“But over here, there is someone who wishes for someone to hear her out. As long as Mi-chan is present, all of you might be more willing to cooperate, which is why I tried to ask Mi-chan for a favour.”

Gabriel scratched his head, and took one step back from the room 201 porch which was completely blocked by his huge frame and Shiba’s bulk.

After Gabriel backed up, it could be seen between the gaps in the landlady's body that a lady was standing on the other side.

“Sigh, unfortunately, there was no positive reply.”

Even just hearing his voice, it could be deduced that Gabriel was smiling wryly.

“That is to be expected.”

Ashiya also spoke to the lady standing there.

“After all, Crestia Bell has no obligation to listen to you.”

“Because she's an inquisitor, she did not say it this directly, but she said something with a similar meaning.”

“I know very well that my methods are not worth acknowledging, but I have really reached my wit's end.....”

The lady the landlady and Gabriel bought over pleaded with Ashiya in a sorrowful manner.

“Please, let me meet with Satan. I want to ask him to hear my explanation again.”

“I refuse. Demon King-sama had issued orders, which would be to chase you away if you come.”

Ashiya coldly rejected the pleading voice of Archangel Lailah.

“Demon King-sama is very busy. Especially nowadays, he has accumulated a lot of work fatigue because of Emilia, and even experienced that kind of misfortune some time back. Demon King-sama still needs to work on a new business model after this, so he cannot shoulder any extra burden.”

Although so far, Ashiya had been treating the ladies with a gentlemanly attitude, he would definitely not show any openings in front of this lady.

“I think I don’t have to emphasize this, but barge into Demon King-sama’s workplace if you dare. At that time, you will forever lose the chance to meet with Demon King-sama. If you understand, then go away. No matter what you say right now, my master’s wishes will not change.

“How can this be.....”

The lady’s expression and voice was filled with hurt.

“It looks like it would be better to come another day. Even if you force them, you will not get a positive reply. Although I can mediate the process, I still cannot force them to change their minds.”

With Shiba’s advice, Lailah nodded her head slightly, and left after bowing to Ashiya.

“Sigh~ This can’t be helped. Sorry, Mi-chan, causing you to make a wasted trip.”

“Visiting the tenants here is one of the responsibilities of a landlady anyway.”

“I’m grateful that you’re able to say this. Oh yes, I still have something to say to both of them, can I stay for a while?”

“Of course it’s fine. But please come back before dinner.”

“I understand.”

From Ashiya’s point of view, Gabriel used an unbelievably honest attitude when interacting with Shiba, and after handing the handbag to Shiba, Gabriel lightly waved his hand to the two people who were leaving.

“Such a cold attitude.”

Then, he turned back towards Ashiya with a mocking smile on his face.

“We are demons faced with angels, this should be considered a normal reaction.”

“Yeah, perhaps it is like that,” Ashiya said in a stern manner, and Gabriel did not continue to debate about it.

“Since she was already taking action with such a scary amount of patience before, Lailah should also know that it would be useless even if she became anxious now, but with this situation, it might not allow her to act in such a way.”

※

After Maou and the others safely rescued Emi who was imprisoned in Ente Isla, what awaited them was the fact that Urushihara was admitted in hospital and the ‘truth of the world’ which was revealed by the landlady of Villa Rosa Sasazuka Shiba Miki.

Based on Shiba’s explanation in Urushihara’s hospital room:

The two worlds, Ente Isla and Earth, although they were different worlds in a literal sense, they were located in the same universe. Although this fact did

not have any immediate effect on the situation, this was still a piece of information which was enough to cause people to view these people and the things of these two worlds with a new perspective.

The two worlds were not interacting in a cross dimensional manner which exceeded human intelligence, but existed in the same universe and used the same physical laws, even if there was no way to do so now, theoretically in the future, the possibility of interacting with methods other than the gates was not zero.

Even the Demon World where the demons lived was not an exception as well.

The world the demons lived in was not underground and was not part of an ancient legend, but was a certain planet floating in the universe.

Then how about ‘Heaven?’

The living existences who had obstructed Maou, Emi, and the others many times so far— angels, where was the world they lived in located?

The instant the citizens of Ente Isla, sandwiched between ‘Heaven’ and the ‘Demon World’, learned of this fact, an angel appeared at the hospital room where the Demon King, angel, and humans were gathered.

Archangel Lailah.

Resident of Heaven, the existence who saved the young Satan, and the ‘mother’ of the girls who were born from the Tree of Life.

Most importantly, she was also Emilia Justina’s birth mother.

The angel who had been leaving faint traces around Maou and the others until now finally appeared, however what was revealed at the same time was not new truths about the world, not a legendary holy tool which could solve everything, and definitely not the path leading to an ideal village, but a chasm between mother and daughter which was so hard to fill up that one could only feel despair.

Emi knew that of all the tragedies and troubles which happened around her ever since she started living in Japan, after tracing it to the source, most of them were caused by this mother of hers.

But when Lailah, this mother of hers, actually appeared in front of Emi, the emotions which surfaced in her mind were not negative emotions like anger or sadness towards these unreasonable experiences.

Her mind, which went blank, what it commanded her body, was to reject this existence.

Although Emi was just repeatedly slapping Lailah with no expression on her face in the eyes of the bystanders, Emi was not releasing her emotions of hatred or dissatisfaction on her mother.

She did not want to admit at all that part of her appearance was inherited from the existence in front of her.

During the process of continuously slapping Lailah's cheeks, on the surface, it looked as if Emi was looking at Lailah's face, but in reality, it was not like that.

Until she was stopped by Maou, her vision was probably completely blank.

When she came to her senses, Emi only saw her father standing next to an 'unknown person' with red and swollen cheeks, and Maou was standing in front of her like he was using his body to block her father and the 'unknown person.'

Looking at the cloth of the long sleeved UNIXLO shirt, Emi noticed that Emerada was grabbing onto her hand.

She knew that both of them were trying to stop her, but she did not know why she was being stopped.

Even so, Emi still understood one thing, which was that everyone present did not allow Emi to continue rejecting that ‘unknown person.’

Therefore, Emi did not listen to anything, grabbed Alas=Ramus from Acies’s arms and left Urushihara’s hospital room without even looking at Lailah.

※

“You should be able to listen to what she wants to say at least.”

“I don’t want to, you should know that I hate troublesome things right. Sigh, the colour of my hair finally reverted.”

With Lailah’s and the landlady’s departure, in room 201 where only Gabriel stayed behind, Urushihara looked at his long fringe to confirm that his hair colour had changed back.

“Since the Demon King and Emilia are not willing to listen, then you’re the only one left. And in a certain sense, you’re the only person who is related to the events of that time.”

“I don’t care. It’s not as if I voluntarily got myself involved. Sigh, although I am grateful to her to some extent for creating the opportunity for me to escape that boring world, but to be honest, after such a long time, many areas in my memories have become vague, from the start, those guys threw me aside in an irresponsible manner. So, we don’t owe each other anything.”

“Although I don’t know what both of you are talking about, but why are you entering the apartment like it’s the most natural thing to do?”

“It’s nothing much, I’m just curious why all of you are so stubbornly refusing to listen to her. As for you, although you’re showing an unhappy expression, you’re still naturally brewing tea for me. It looks like the Demon King Army is very civilised after all.”

Ashiya maintained his glare, and placed the sencha in front of Gabriel.

(T/N: Sencha (煎茶) is a type of Japanese ryokucha (緑茶, green tea) which is prepared by infusing the processed whole tea leaves in hot water. It is the most popular tea in Japan.)

“This is not for you. It’s for the landlady’s servant. If you did not have the landlady’s backing, then forget about serving you tea, I would not even want you to breath the air in this apartment.”

“How strict. Sigh, it’ll still be better than being sent flying by the Demon King. Then I’ll help myself.”

Gabriel did not think too much about it, and drank the hot tea without any hesitation.

“Maou has a personality of not really bearing any grudges after an incident is settled after all.”

“I don’t wish for him to bear any grudges either. I was trashed so badly the last time, it was so long ago that I can’t remember it anymore.”

Even if Gabriel responded to Urushihara with a smile, in reality, during the battle in the Eastern Continent of Ente Isla, Maou, who had obtained Acies’s power, caused Gabriel to sustain a near fatal injury, such that he even had to be cared for in Shiba’s home after being brought back to Japan.

Although the circumstances which led to him becoming Shiba’s servant were not known, no one wanted to know about it either.

“When you’re with the landlady, didn’t any strange changes happen to your body?”

Urushihara, whose hair colour would change just by being near Shiba, asked this unhappily.

“Hm~ there aren’t any special changes. No matter what, Mi-chan still cares for me a lot. Although she did restrict me from using holy magic due to considerations of my body and Japan’s environment, but as long as I live normally, there aren’t much opportunities to use holy magic in this country. Most of the home electronics can be operated with one finger.”

“Even you have turned out like this.”

Urushihara sat on the tatami in a depressed manner.

“By the way, Alsiel seemed to have mentioned just now that the Demon King had encountered something unfortunate.”

“Ugh.....”

Gabriel’s words caused Ashiya to show a rigid expression.

“Although I know asking about this would put you in a bad mood, but what happened exactly..... or rather, is it because of Lailah again?”

All the facts which Lailah revealed in Urushihara’s hospital room definitely would be able to have a huge impact on Maou and the others.

However, from Gabriel’s point of view, it was rather impossible for Maou, who was strong in both mind and body, to brood over something ‘of just this standard.’

“T-that is.....”

In a rare manner, Ashiya was vague in his answer.

“Eh? Is it something very serious?”

Gabriel, surprised at Ashiya’s response, continue to ask about it.

“Puu.”

Urushihara laughed out loud like he could no longer hold it in.

“Ahahahaha! Oh my, Ashiya should be talking about that, right? Saying ‘hurt’ is too much of an exaggeration. Doesn’t that happen often?”

“Shut up, Urushihara! How can someone like you understand the pain felt by Demon King-sama!”

“What do you mean by pain, he brought it upon himself.”

“Huh? What? What do you mean by something which happens often? And what is it about bringing it upon himself?”

With regards to Gabriel's questions, Ashiya and Urushihara showed completely opposite reactions respectively.

"Sigh~ although he worked so hard, things ended up like this, it's actually rather pitiful," Urushihara said with a smile.

"Maou finally got his driving license."

"Driving license? What do you mean? You're talking about the Moped license?"

The unexpected answer caused Gabriel to become very confused.

"I remember the deadline for the submission is today, so Maou should be working in a depressed manner for the whole day today."

".....Urushihara, you can forget about eating today."

"Why! I'm only saying the truth!"

"The reason why we are barely able to make a living is all because of Demon King-sama, so be more careful with your words! Even if it's the truth, these words need to be kept a secret!"

“So didn’t I say that since we already have demonic magic there’s no need for us to work so hard?!”

“Become more aware of the importance of ‘work’ for mental health! And strictly speaking, labour and work.....”

“To me, work and labour is the same thing! Whatever you say is useless!”

“You’ve said it, Urushihara! I will definitely not let you off today.”

“I say..... both of you.....”

The two Demon Generals forgot about Gabriel’s presence, and continued this debate which surpassed the level of meaningless, enough to cause a fruit to regress into a seed, until night time.

※

Close to 10pm at the MgRonalds store in front of Hatagaya station, Kisaki was greeting the employees who were knocking off work one by one.

Kisaki, who initiated a conversation with Chiho at the MdCafe on the second floor, mumbled softly while looking at Maou who was wiping an empty table in the corner.

“Maa-kun’s expression today looks a little gloomy, do you know what happened?”

“Eh? Uh, erhm, how should I say it.”

Faced with Kisaki’s question, Chiho could only reply with a dry laugh.

Maou Sadao, the King of the Demon World, as well as the proxy shop manager of the MgRonaldds in front of Hatagaya station, would normally show a broad smile on his face, but just for today, his expression was covered by a shadow which could only be noticed by those who know him very well.

His smile was a little forced.

Kisaki Mayumi, who had high hopes for Maou and had a keen sense of observation after all, could see that his condition was not at his peak.

Sasaki Chiho, who came to work straight after school knew the answer to Kisaki’s question.

Although she knew, it was something which the people around Maou should not casually say if he had not revealed it first.

“I’m not very clear about it as well, I only know that Maou-san seemed to have failed.”

“Failed? Don’t tell me he failed to get the Moped license again?”

“Ahhhhhh, wrong, it’s not that, he did successfully get his license!”

Not knowing if Kisasi’s unrestrained voice could be heard by Maou, this made Chiho very worried.

“That’s good. After all, if our main manpower is continuously unable to obtain the license when the delivery service is about to start, it would affect morale!”

“T, that makes sense.....”

Just from the results, Maou had failed to obtain the license twice.

The first time was simply because he did not get enough points. The second time was because he forfeited the exam.

Although the reasons for both these times were unavoidable reasons, to Maou, who had blundered away these two chances, it could be said that deep scars were left within him.

Even so, Maou still bravely continued to challenge it.

Overcoming the commotion in Ente Isla, regaining his life in Japan, his enemy Emi being hired as an employee in McDonalds and the reunion with the Archangel Lailah, who could be considered the starting point of his conquest; after experiencing all this, Maou ought to have entered a new stage.

However, at the very last stage of the driving license exam, a merciless blade was still swung towards the King of Demons.

“Yeah, I should encourage him a little. With Maa-kun like this, he cannot become a role model for the people around him. Maa-kun is a person after all, if he has any troubles, he would need someone to support him.”

“E-erhm, Kisasi-san..... wah, she went over already.”

Although Maa-kun was not a human at all, the ideal supervisor who was worried about the mental state of her subordinates, was going to ask a brutal question without any malice.

“Maa-kun, what’s wrong with you today? Your movements don’t seem that sharp. Are you troubled over anything?”

“Ah, n-no, I don’t have any troubles…….”

“Is that so? You’re not superman either. If you have any troubles, please don’t bottle them up.”

“A-alright…….”

“Ah, that’s great, everything seems to be fine.”

Chiho, who heard Maou’s and Kisaki’s conversation from afar, breathed a sigh of relief because she noticed that Kisaki was not asking too much about Maou’s issues—

“Ah, oh yes, let me see your driving license later. The records of all employees responsible for the deliveries need to be verified beforehand.”

“Ah…….”

She froze immediately.

Observing carefully, Maou also showed an obvious stony face.

Although Kisasi normally would not do something as indiscreet as getting to the bottom of private matters, it was different matter altogether if it was related to work.

From her position of supervising her employees, in order to avoid the situation of having no license, Kisasi had a duty to manage this information.

But the crucial driving license was the reason for Maou's melancholy.

“M-must you really see it?”

“Of course. What are you saying? There aren't any customers now, so while Chi-chan is still here, you should go downstairs to submit the license.”

“I-I understand..... sigh.”

Maou showed an expression of despair like a convict who received a death sentence and followed behind Kisasi downstairs.

“Maou-san.....”

Chiho paid attention to Maou's situation from afar with a sad expression.

Chiho knew the reason for Maou's listlessness very well. Even though she never mentioned this to anyone before, Chiho had harboured similar troubles before.

It was just that although Chiho and Maou had similar troubles, the time both of them needed to solve this trouble was vastly different.

Therefore, Chiho was unable to comfort Maou in a careless manner.

“There's something strange about Maa-kun after all.”

On the other hand, Maou's colleague Kawada Takefumi, who like Kisasi, had noticed the slight changes in Maou, mumbled this softly when he saw Maou being taken away by Kisasi, but Emi, working on the same floor as Kawada, readily ignored Kawada's opinion.

“I don't think so.”

Emi and Chiho got off work at 10pm, in order to quickly finish the work at hand, she answered Kawada without raising her head.

“Is that so? I do feel that his movements aren't that smooth.”

“He must have eaten something unclean, so he has a stomachache.”

“Eaten something unclean?”

Emi’s answer caused Kawada to show a wry smile.

“Although I have been thinking this since the beginning, Yusa-san probably doesn’t dislike Maa-kun right?”

“I rejoice in the fact that I’ve never liked him,” Emi said bluntly, and Kawada showed a wry smile again.

Just as a pause in conversation between the both of them occurred, Chiho came down from the second floor.

The clock showed that it was just past 10pm.

“Then, what’s the reason?” Emi got up from within the counter, and asked the depressed Chiho in a slightly warmer tone.

Then Chiho replied with a voice which did not lose out to her depressed expression, “It’s the driving license.”

““Driving license?””

“To be more accurate, it’s the photo on the driving license.”

“I see.”

“What does that mean?”

Kawada, who had a driving license, clapped his hands like he discovered something, as for Emi who did not have a driving license, she showed a face of confusion because she did not understand.

“Don’t tell me that the photo taken contained a weird expression?”

“That’s right.....”

“Huh?”

Chiho confirmed Kawada’s deduction while Emi made a noise of surprise.

“He seemed to be very dissatisfied with his photo on the driving license.”

“Would he be that depressed because of something like that?”

“I’m not too clear about it, but the photo for that driving license seems to have been taken at the driving centre. Kawacchi-san normally rides a Moped right? Are all driving license photos like this?”

“Yeah, that’s right. Actually the process is pretty smooth, and it only takes a short while to take the photo.”

“Then according to what Maou-san said, he seemed to ‘have been aimed at a moment of weakness.’”

“But most of the photos in the identification documents are like that. Most of my university friends aren’t that happy about them either.”

Even if everyone knew that the driving license could be used as an identification document, because it had this characteristic, there were strict guidelines imposed on the photo printed on it.

As long as the eyebrows were covered, or the hairstyle, attire and background made it difficult to determine the expression or facial shape, it would not be approved. Basically, a person needs to be expressionless when taking the photo, in addition, a photo where the person could not be recognised by others would not be approved.

On the contrary, as long as the conditions were met, a person could use the photo they had brought along when renewing the driving license, but even so, the photo taken by the driving centre or police station would be used.

And when many people obtain their license for the first time or renew their license, for the sake of convenience, as long as the photo they have taken meets the requirements, there was basically no need to take another photo.

As a result, when they received their driving license, the photo on it would normally be very different from what they imagined.....

“Erhm, my student ID photo had also failed before when it was taken because of my fringe, and when I comforted Maou-san by telling him that it was something which happens frequently, he passed me his driving license for me to take a look.....”

Chiho shifted her gaze left and right in an embarrassed manner.

“Erhm, his nose.....”

““Nose?””

“It seemed like the photo was taken during the moment his nostrils expanded.....” Chiho said in a troubled manner.

Since Chiho, who normally did not hide her positive feelings towards Maou, could feel this troubled, it was clear that there was something strange with that photo when compared to Maou's normal appearance.

Of course, since the employees of the driving license judged that it was good enough to be the photo for the driving license, to the people who do not know Maou, it should be just a normal ID photo.

But to the people with whom he normally interacted with, that must be an extremely interesting face.

Uncoincidentally it was at this moment that Maou, who had just finished submitting the driving license to Kisasi, walked past the counter.

Chiho and Kawada did not miss Emi's evil smile.

“Let me take a look.”

“Huh?”

“Your driving license photo is very interesting, right? Let me take a look.”

At this moment, Maou looked towards Chiho with a pained expression like it was the end of the world.

“Chi-chan, you betrayed me?”

“Ah, uh, erhm, s-sorry!”

Chiho, holding her visor hat in her hands, after her gaze wavered a little, she quickly turned and escaped into the employee room.



“It’s not Chiho-chan’s fault, we forced her to say it. I don’t have a driving license, so I really want to see it. What does it roughly look like.”

“Why should I show it to you! You’ve ended work too, right? Hurry up and go home!”

“What’s the problem, it’s not as if you’ll lose a piece of you.”

“My restraint, life span, spirit, and other things will reduce! Go home! Scram! When you get a driving license, I hope that your face in the photo would be weird too!”

“How should I say it?”

Seeing the trio’s situation, Kisaki, who came out after Maou, warned them in a stern tone, “Hey, what are all of you doing! It’s still work hours right now!”

Kawada, who was scolded together although he did not join in the fun, sighed like he could not accept it.

“It feels like I keep losing out.”

※

Twelve-thirty, late at night, Maou, who completed the tasks for closing for the day, closed the powered off automatic door from the outside.

Maou, who would normally stretch his back in front of Dullahan II when he reached the car park, did not feel any sense of accomplishment or release from ending work today.

“Damn, that Emi.....”

Still being teased by Emi about the driving license photo in the end, Maou said this with tears in his eyes.

“The driving license photo really made you feel that dissatisfied?”

Kawada, who stayed as late as Maou, asked this as he got on the Moped he used for commuting, and Maou replied in a depressed manner, “Even Kiskeya-san laughed a bit.”

“T-that’s really bad. Saying that much, even I have the urge to see it now.”

Kawada said this as he put on his helmet.

“Definitely not! Seriously, ever since Emi came, nothing good has happened.”

“Does it matter, Yusa-san seems rather listless lately, just treat it as using an interesting photo to raise the employees’ morale.”

“Eh?”

Maou was surprised at what Kawada said.

“You said who’s listless?”

“Yusa-san, of course.”

“Which part of her looks listless.”

“I don’t know, I just felt it vaguely.”

Kawada looked up like he remembered something as he confirmed the state of his helmet.

“It was not long after Yusa-san was hired I guess. Didn’t you notice that there was one day when she was especially depressed and looked especially dispirited? Kisasi-san was not around that day, so Maa-kun should have been in the store.”

“Yeah.”

With regards to that ‘one day’ which Kawada mentioned: although Maou did not remember Emi’s state when she was working, he clearly knew the reason for Emi’s ‘depression.’

“Then, the next time I worked the same shift with her was three days later, she had already recovered to match my first impression of her, but it felt like she had become a little nervous in some sense.....”

“Kawacchi, you’re really observing Emi very closely, huh.”

“Don’t misunderstand anything.”

Maou’s words caused Kawada to wave his hand in a rather frantic manner to deny it.

“That’s because Yusa-san stands out in various ways. Kisaki-san had high expectations for her since the beginning, and since she’s also someone familiar to Maou and Chi-chan, I’ll naturally pay attention right? My gaze will subconsciously move towards her.”

“You’d better give up on her. She’s really hard to handle.”

“Didn’t I already say that I don’t have that kind of intention!”

Even though it was late at night, it could be seen that Kawada’s expression was especially frantic.

“A-anyway, Maa-kun, since you’re the person in charge of Yusa-san’s training, you should be more concerned about these things, right? Although her appearance looks strong, her mental state might be unexpectedly weak.”

Maou was so surprised that he was momentarily speechless.

“.....Kawacchi, you really have good observation.”

The time Kawada and Emi spent together, should be those few days after Emi was hired by MgRonalds, but in such a short time, he had already seen through Emi’s personal characteristics.

“Oi!”

“No, I’m truly in awe. Kawacchi, even if you start now, can’t you consider aiming to become consultative therapist?”

Even if Maou's attitude was rather serious, Kawada still shook his head after starting up the engine of the Moped.

"I don't want to. I don't wish to be responsible for other people's lives. So I have never intended to take this route."

".....That sounds reasonable too."

"Although other people often do end up discussing things with me, and I would also give some of my personal opinions to my friends or the people I know, no one can guarantee that what I say is correct, right? You better not tell Yusa-san that I have said this before."

"I won't say anything. Anyway, I will pay some attention."

"I'll leave it to you. Then, I'll leave first."

Although he glanced at Maou in a doubtful manner, Kawada did not say anything more, turned on the Moped's rear lights and left. After Maou watched Kawada leave on his Moped, he pursed his lips.

"Not wanting to take responsibility for the lives of others, huh."

What Kawada said casually unexpectedly carved itself deeply into Maou's mind.

“That is true.”

Maou unlocked Dullahan II which was parked at the car park, and said this to himself.

※

“B-lease.....whishen to me.....”

That day, Lailah, slumped on the ground, said this with swollen cheeks.

“I have nothing to say to you,” Emi looked at her slightly red palm and answered coldly.

“Sit there properly. I am going to help cut your head off.”

“Wait~~ calm down a little~~!”

“Hey, Emi, calm down a little, that's even worse then slicing me apart!”

Even if Emerada was pulling on her hand, and Maou was standing in front of her, Emi still looked like she did not plan to back off.

“Out of the way.”

Even Emerada, Emi’s comrade who had been through life and death with her, and Emi’s enemy Maou, who had fought with her with their lives on the line, had never seen that cold gaze.

“Out of the way, I’m very angry right now.”

“I-I know that~”

Emi spoke in a cold tone which made people wonder if the air had frozen.

She definitely had not lost her cool because of her anger towards Lailah.

But she was seriously wanting to punish Lailah.

“Em, Demon King, and Father”

Emi glared towards Lailah and Nord, who were protected behind the backs of Emerada and Maou.

“We have always been played around by that woman under strange circumstances. We have encountered life threatening situations, or almost lost something important to us, and it did not happen just once or twice. Don’t all of you feel that we cannot forgive what that woman has done around us, no matter what the reasons are?”

“B-but~~”

“Didn’t that unscrupulous woman also cause Em a lot of trouble? You were forced to help her pay for her meal expenses for a long time right?”

“E-erhm~~ although such a thing did happen~~”

Emerada remembered when she went to Japan for the first time, she had once complained to Emi in a half joking manner that her personal room in Saint Aire Sorcery Management Institute had been occupied by Lailah for a period of time, and it caused her to momentarily become pale.

“But even so~~ it’s not so bad that you need to do things to this extent~~”

“What do you mean to this extent? Don’t tell me because that woman is my mother, you want to protect her?”

“It-it’s not just because of that~~~ but if this goes on.....”

“Yeah, I will definitely kill her.”

“Emilia~~” Emerada shouted in a pained manner, but she still could not think of any methods or words which could stop Emi.

“Emi! I can understand your feelings, but calm down first! Even if you want to let out your feelings on her, it doesn’t have to be now right?”

Maou also could not tell how serious Emi was about it, but he also knew that if he did or said something wrong, the current Emi could turn Alas=Ramus into the holy sword to attack Lailah.

“I don’t want to listen to you saying that you understand my feelings. You also know that this woman is always elusive, right? If you let her escape this time, who knows when would she appear in front of us next? It might be a few hundred, or a few thousand years later. At that time, will you be willing to kill her in my place?”

“Hey, Emi.”

“.....”

Emi and Maou glared at one another.

Everyone in the room watched this strange scene of a Demon King protecting an angel and human, while the Hero was preparing to harm the angel and human.....

“Of course, I was just joking.”

Emi shifted her gaze away first.

“I am the one who is going to defeat you. How can I ask you to help me do things.”

“Yeah..... although it feels a little strange, as long as you’re willing to banish the idea.....”

“Emilia.....”

This was really an overly serious oversight.

A gust of wind passed between Maou and Emerada.

Maou and Emerada could only barely see Emi's long hair pass through their line of vision.

The visions of everyone present could not keep up with Emi's super high speed movement, and the only evidence left was the huge dent left in the linoleum floor of the room.

Emi raised her fist, and concentrated the high density holy magic which only Emi could use.

Maou only kept up with the situation with his thoughts—Emi was serious.

“Sigh, calm down a bit.”

However, that flash, filled with a surging anger which even the Demon King or Great Sorceress could not stop, was quietly stopped by a black wind.

“You're really not a normal human.”

“You're making it sound as if you're a normal human.”

Even if she did not use the holy sword, that punch contained enough power which would shatter all the bones in a ‘normal human,’ but Ooguro Amene actually received that attack with a composed expression on her face.

Amane did not look like she had used any force, but caught Emi's fist with one hand in a relaxed manner like she was catching a baseball.

Maou and Emerada, who turned around one step too slowly because of Emi's unexpected actions, sucked in a breath when they saw the situation between Emi and Amane.

“E-Emilia.....”

“Emi..... you just.....”

“Some of you are just too careless. If only Yusa-san was more serious about it.”

Amane used her chin to gesture behind her.

“That uncle over there might just disappear from this world.”

“.....!”

Behind Amane was Nord, who was protecting Lailah with his shivering body, and whose line of sight had never left Emi from the beginning till the end.

Emi looked towards Nord. She knew her father would definitely not move his gaze away from her.

She also knew her father would definitely not abandon Lailah. So even if she succeeded in shaking off Maou and Emerada, Emi did not think that she would be able to do anything to Lailah.

To Lailah, she could show no mercy at all, but against her father, she could not do the same.

That action from Emi was just a test.

“I’m going back.”

Emi pulled away from Amane, did not even glance at the stunned Maou and Emerada—

“E-Emi.....”

(T/N: Emi as in the first half of Emilia and not her Japanese name Emi)

“Mama.....”

and taking away Alas=Ramus from Acies' arms like she was snatching her away, Emi left Urushihara's hospital room.

Until the door closed, no one was able to speak.

Except for one person.

“Although I'm not too sure about the situation.”

That was Chiho.

“But it should be the first time you and I have met, Lailah-san.”

“Y-you're?”

Lailah was still frozen behind Nord's back.

Therefore, Chiho kneeled in front of Lailah.

“Although I don't know what happened..... but just now, just like in the past, you used my body..... am I right?”

Within the room which felt shaken because of Emi's violent actions, only Chiho's appearance seemed the same as normal.

But even if there was a smile on her face, she was exuding a resoluteness that did not allow for any debate.

“Chi, Chi-chan?”

“Maou-san, it's fine, please allow me to talk to her a bit.”

Chiho did not turn around to look at Maou who had voiced out his concern, and looked straight at Lailah's eyes from the front.

“Do you know what Yusa-san..... what Emilia was most angry about, when she was in this room?”

“Eh.....”

Lailah looked towards Chiho in a lost manner.

An angel who had lived for thousands of years, was stumped by a question from a seventeen-year-old girl.

“Earlier, when I was admitted into this hospital, you had lent me your power before right. Until now, I am still very grateful to you. Because at that time, I finally successfully helped Maou-san and Yusa-san.”

“T-that was.....”

When the judgement angel Raguel came to Japan.

When Raguel was looking for Lailah who fled from Heaven, he had used the searching spell “Sonar” by making use of the electromagnetic waves emitted by televisions.

Although Chiho, who had been strongly affected by the sonar, fell into a coma because of that, when beating back Raguel and Gabriel, who had been working actively behind Raguel, someone had left power in Chiho’s body.

At that time, Chiho had listened to the voice of the existence who had lent her power.

That voice was definitely the voice of the angel in front of her, which was Lailah’s voice.

“But, in reality, it was not like that right.”

“Eh?”

“Because you don’t want to appear personally, that’s why you had no choice but to lend me the power.”

“!”

Lailah looked up in surprise, she did not look towards Chiho, but turned behind her.

The hospital room door Emi just walked through had a special design, even if the door was casually opened and closed, it would open and close all the way.

“Lailah-san is strong right. At least stronger than ‘normal humans’ stronger than Nord-san.”

“Ah.....”

“Emilia-san is not an unreasonable person. But, you should know that she would definitely have some complex thoughts about her mother. Although I don’t know why Lailah-san had never come forward..... but at least you shouldn’t have acted like that just now, you need to proactively step forward.”

Chiho's stern words, caused Lailah to become speechless.

The just now Chiho talked about, was the moment when Amane blocked Emi's punch.

No matter what the method was, Lailah had to withstand the punch which bore Emi's feelings.

However, in reality, under Nord's, Amane's, Emerada's and Maou's protection, Lailah was just shouting 'Listen to me' from a place a few layers away from Emi.

Lailah was always acting to interfere and disrupt everything from a place which could not be seen, and her actions just now seemed to be representing all those actions so far that had caused Emi much unhappiness.

Everyone present knew that Lailah was acting because of some greater purpose.

But since she was going to involve everyone present because of that purpose, when it was time for her to step forward, she should step forward herself.

So in that moment just now, Lailah had lost her greatest chance.

The chance to speak of her goal to her daughter who had currently become the strongest human existence, Emilia Justina.

“Although I kept asking Amane-san to allow me to be released from the hospital, if all of you continue to cause a ruckus inside the hospital room, I will still be very troubled..... ugh!”

Without reading the atmosphere, Urushihara started to complain but was immediately given a sideways glare by Shiba.

“Ah, I-I.....”

Lailah, as if she had finally discovered the huge fact, seemed to want to say something, but Chiho hardened her heart and shook her head.

“I will not be of much help even if I heard it, and I will not help you pass the message to Emilia-san. I am just ‘a normal human,’ and I am Emilia-san’s friend. I am unable to do things which would make my friends dislike me.”

After Chiho said this, without waiting for Lailah to reply, she got up and grabbed Emerada’s hand.

“E-erhm.”

“Emerada-san, let’s go, someone has to chase after her. I think Emerada-san is the best choice.”

“Is, is that so? Ra, rather than me, wouldn’t Miss Bell or the Demon King.....”

“Why, why should it be me?”

Not considering Suzuno, Maou, who was named, rebuked frantically, but Chiho shook her head and replied, “It definitely cannot be Maou-san. After encountering this kind of thing, Yusa-san will definitely not cry, instead she will be very angry right now. If Maou-san showed up at this time without a care, it will only make the situation worse. Even if he said that he was giving up on conquering the world, he would definitely be cut down. So right now, we can only depend on me, Emerada-san, or Suzuno-san, who would not be attacked by Yusa-san.”

Although it was a very exaggerated analysis, for unknown reasons, everyone accepted Chiho’s words without any doubts.

“Emerada-dono, you should go.”

“Miss Bell~~?”

Suzuno, understanding what Chiho meant, also encouraged Emerada.

“Chiho-dono, leave this place to me. You should quickly bring Emerada-dono to chase after Emilia. What Emilia needs right now are people who can accept her unconditionally. In that sense, Emerada-dono should be the most suitable choice amongst everyone present.”

After Chiho and Emerada left the hospital room, the only humans remaining were Nord and Suzuno.

But no matter what, Nord could only take actions which favour Lailah.

With this, even if Shiba and Amane were present, there still was no one who understood the whole situation and ‘purely stood on the side of Maou and the others.’

Just based on this point, in terms of the balance between intelligence and power, Suzuno was the best choice.

“I understand! Let’s go, Emerada-san. Then Urushihara-san, please take care!”

Chiho pulled Emerada’s hand, and quickly ran out of the hospital room.

Maou and the rest who were left behind could only look at the door and Lailah alternately in a stunned manner.

Lailah, dealt a serious mental blow, widened her eyes in surprise, and she breathed heavily as she slumped on the ground with her hands touching the floor.

This storm-like development caused Maou to feel dizzy.

Although it was not as if he did not feel happy at all about the reunion after a few hundred years, after the consecutive unexpected developments, those kinds of feelings had already flown to the other end of the universe.

“Lailah-san came to Earth seventeen years ago right?”

Shiba added on like she was continuing the pursuit.

“““Seventeen years ago?””” Maou, Ashiya and Suzuno asked in unison.

Although it could be deduced from Nord’s narration that Lailah came to Earth earlier than Maou and Emi, they did not expect that it occurred that long ago.

“Please wait a moment, Shiba-dono, since it’s 17 years ago, that means.....”
Suzuno’s gaze alternated between Nord and the landlady repeatedly, “It was not long after Emilia was born?”

Lailah nodded lightly to answer Nord’s question.

When Lailah gave birth to Emi and left their home, Nord had seen shooting stars in the sky chasing after Lailah.

“Because Emilia and you were close to being discovered.....”

It was not difficult to shake off Heaven’s pursuit.

But she could not do it this time.

Because Lailah cannot allow Nord and Emi, and the Yesod fragments entrusted to the both of them, be discovered.

Because of this purpose, she had to act as a huge prey as much as possible to attract the pursuers.

“But..... allowing those guys to come this close, meant that it was impossible to lose them completely.”

Even if Lailah herself had the title of archangel, this did not mean that she had a strong power exceeding that of Gabriel and the other guardian angels.

If a direct comparison was made, her ability was probably about the same as Sariel or Raguel.

“And the place I escaped to while gambling the small glimmer of hope I had, was this Earth, on a night where the starry sky was very beautiful, I reached the outskirts of Cairo.”

“Egypt’s Cairo? Why did you go to that kind of place.....”

“It can only be said that the ‘Yesod’ fragments Lailah-san had led her to us. At that time, I happened to be staying at Cairo with relatives, Amane was not as dissolute as now, was an obedient girl, and also frequently appeared at the gathering between relatives.....”

“Aunt Mi-chan, you don’t have to say such unnecessary things.”

“Landlady-san, you and Lailah knew each other since that long ago?”

Maou asked this to Shiba who had been composed and did not change her expression since Lailah appeared until now.

“Those angels who were chasing after Lailah, why did they give up in the end?”

Rather than asking Lailah herself, Ashiya was directing the question to Shiba instead.

But the one who answered this question was not Shiba, but Amane.

“They did not give up, we just scared them a little.”

“The we you’re referring to, is it Amane-dono and Shiba-dono?”

“Yeah, it’s not wrong to say that.”

Amane answered Suzuno’s question.

“More accurately, it was our relatives.”

“Relatives, could it be.....”

“That’s right. That would be the Sephirah family of Earth. Although there are second or third generations like me, at that time, by coincidence, many relatives had gathered to go to Cairo for vacation.”

Amane looked towards Acies who was standing next to Urushihara's bed, and as if she was had already grown tired of the developments taking place within the hospital room, she was currently playing with some equipment which obviously should not be touched.

“I remember playing at Uncle George's home for the whole of summer. Ah, Uncle George is the Blue of 'Chesed.'”

“‘Chesed?’ ‘Chesed’ is also in Japan?”

“Hey! What did she just press!”

Acies, who reacted to the fourth Sephirah 'Chesed', happened to press on a button next to Urushihara's bed which obviously should not be carelessly pressed by people who did not have any knowledge about it, causing Urushihara to shout in panic.

“Wrong, I already said it was Uncle George. He lives in Cairo, his nationality is British. He is a different person from the 'Chesed' Acies-chan knows. At that time, with Uncle George's invitation, everyone had gathered at Cairo, I remember it was the Ooguro family, Aunt Mi-chan, and the Goodman family right?”

“At that time, Goodman from Hawaii could not come because of urgent work, so only the youngest child, Tim, came.”

“Ah, Tim, that aggressive brat. At that time, he broke the toy boat Uncle George bought for me in one go!”

“Even if he used to be an aggressive brat, he has already inherited the Goodman Marine Transport Company, and is a capable young businessman. Today, not just a toy boat, he can even easily give you a yacht, you know?”

“I’m still the heir for Ooguro-ya alright! Then again, he did tell me before that he wanted to give me a boat and wanted me to collect it, but the photo he sent over looked like a passenger liner, and cannot be sailed in Kimigahama at all, so I refused it.”

Maou, in a speechless manner, listened to Shiba and Amane talk about the topic of relatives which were unimportant to outsiders, and after hearing the name of a certain location, he asked in a troubled manner,

“Egypt and..... Hawaii?”

“That’s right, I remembered. Haryanark lives in Indonesia! Both of us had tricked Tim into riding a camel and abandoned him in the desert for half a day, making him really angry! How nostalgic.”

Although Maou pitied that young American businessman called Tim, amongst the interesting information about these relatives, there was something which bothered him a lot.

“Egypt, Hawaii, Indonesia. Hm, it seems like we have heard of these somewhere before.....”

“It, it’s feels like we should not be remembering this.....”

Some memories seemed to have been triggered within Ashiya and Urushihara.

“Could it be that?”

In the end, the one who thought of the answer was Suzuno.

“Hawaii, Indonesia, Egypt. Those are the countries where Shiba-dono had sent us letters and photos from.....”

“““Uarghh~””””

Suzuno’s sentence caused the forbidden memories within the three demons to be revived.

That was a compressed Pandora's Box which definitely could not be touched.

A completely gold peacock. A belly dance with a pyramid as the background.

The last thing the King of the Demon World and two Demon Generals thought of, was the terrifying swimsuit.....

“E-excuse me! I'm going to get some fresh air! Ugh!”

Ashiya ran out of the hospital room without waiting for anyone to reply.

“~~Ugh!”

Urushihara fainted after letting out a strange groan, and not just his hair colour, even his skin and eyes started undergoing changes which looked more like they were shrivelling up rather than losing colour, anyways, in the end, although nothing much happened, he became very dehydrated in his own bed, and the machine Acies tinkered with without any permission started to produce loud electronic sounds.

“Uu, uh, ugh! I, I'm not going to admit defeatttt!”

“Demon King, what's wrong?”

“Maou, do you want to go to the washroom?”

A scary amount of willpower surged out from Maou, although his face was sweating a waterfall.

“W-what happened?”

“I, I’m not sure.....”

The overly strong reaction from the three demons caused even Nord and Lailah to watch them in a stunned manner.

Even if he was currently tortured by the memory of the taboo ‘legendary photo’ which could not be released into the world, Maou still stared at the landlady with all his might.

“Could..... it be..... that you knew about us from the start.....”

“Since that time with Lailah-san, my relatives and I have been very wary about the opening and closing of ‘gates.’”

Shiba answered Maou’s question in a straightforward manner.

“Of course, I did not know that the one coming would be Maou-san. I just waited for existences who would come here from Ente Isla after Lailah-san. Although I only heard from Lailah-san about what roughly happened in Ente Isla, I can at least deduce that those people who chased her in Ente Isla, were existences who only brought harm to Earth.”

Just from the results, the ones who came to Earth after Lailah, would be Nord around fifteen years later, followed by Emi, Maou and Ashiya.

“I knew that Nord-san was brought over by Lailah-san from the beginning, as for Yusa-san, although I feel apologetic towards her, as her priority was lower, I postponed handling her case. Compared to Yusa-san, the few of you, whether it is to Earth or humans, all of you are very dangerous existences. Although I did not forget what Lailah-san said, I honestly did not think that Yusa-san’s characteristics and power had a direct connection with the ‘crisis.’ Since Nord-san and Yusa-san will not pose danger to Earth, then according to the direction of us ‘Sephirah’ of Earth, we have to avoid being involved with them as much as possible.”

“Even if Emilia had been holding the holy sword..... holding the ‘Yesod’ fragment since the beginning?”

Right now, it could be confirmed that Shiba already heard about everything related to Lailah from her, and other than the ‘Yesod’ fragments, Shiba also knew things about the source of the ‘Sephirah’—the Tree of Life.

Faced with Suzuno's question, Shiba confirmed it directly.

“Even if there is a difference in the external appearance and state, Yusa-san is already exhibiting the functions of the holy sword's ‘Yadorigi,’ since the situation had already turned out like this, unless the will of the ‘Yesod’ cooperates, ‘Yesod’ cannot be separated from Yusa-san's body.”

From Emi's standpoint, although she was an outsider from an unknown world, she was left aside because she posed no danger, even if Sariel who could take away an angel's status used ‘Evil Light of the Fallen’ to suppress Emi's holy magic, he would still be unable to take away the holy sword from Emi.

“To separate the ‘Yadorigi’ and the Sephirah, there's the death of the ‘Yadorigi,’ the Sephirah leaving based on their own will, and the last resort, only these few ways. But based on Ente Isla's current situation, the last resort probably cannot be used. That's why we judged that even if we did not observe Yusa-san's situation first, it would not cause any problems.”

“I see. But Shiba-dono.”

“What is it?”

“Although you mentioned ‘as long as they do not pose danger to Earth, then involvement with them will be avoided as much as possible.’ If so, what about this thing?”

“H-hey, Suzuno, don’t point at me and say ‘this thing.’”

“A Demon King is a Demon King, a demon who can harm humans, he should be more harmful to Earth than the angels wah!”

“Hey, Suzuno, I cannot pretend I did not hear that. You actually said that the great me is more harmful to Earth than the angels.”

Maou pulled Suzuno’s hair which had been tied up from behind.

“W-what are you doing!”

The inquisitor, who had a dignified expression, waved both her hands around like she was a suddenly caught crayfish.

“So when Maou-san and Ashiya-san arrived in Earth, I received them personally.”



“Eh?”

“Eh? Hey! Let go, Demon King!”

“I immediately discovered that everyone had a very dangerous power. Even if all of you have lost the demonic magic..... lost the negative energy, all of you were still dangerous beings possessing violent characteristics. I had planned to observe all of you for a while, and eradicate all of you once any of you acted strangely.”

“Eh?”

Maou looked for Ashiya’s figure on reflex, then remembered that he had rushed out of the hospital room while covering his mouth and had not returned.

“Although it turned out to be a waste of effort in the end, it is still a happy misjudgement.”

“D-does that mean that the Demon King was not violent at all? It’s about time you let go of me!”

“Never in my dreams did I expect them to start by getting a residency card and looking for a place to live. Even Lailah-san did not show such societal awareness. After that, they did not use their hidden demonic magic, if they

are the type of people who collapse because of malnutrition and are taken away by an ambulance just three days after they arrived, and bought resumes to look for work immediately after they were discharged from hospital, I thought that they would be that dangerous.”

In other words, ever since Maou came to Japan, and until he met Emi and defeated Urushihara, he had been watched by Shiba.

“Taken away by an ambulance because of malnutrition?”

“Y-you’re noisy!”

On the other hand, Suzuno, who for the first time knew what Maou and the others had done before she came to Japan, looked at Maou in surprise while her ponytail was still being grabbed.

Maou, unable to withstand Suzuno’s stare, finally let go of Suzuno’s hair.

“Seriously, what would happen if a strange mark was left behind.”

Suzuno immediately used her hands to comb the front of her hair which was grabbed—

“.....Seriously.”

and using her fingers, she fiddled with her hair for quite a while.

“D-don’t tell me even the housing agent is related to the Sephirah.”

Maou thought back to the employees of the housing agency who helped them settled the apartment related matters on Shiba’s behalf before she returned to the country, but Shiba shook her head slowly.

“I only first looked for all the housing agents in the area and asked them to help manage the information for Villa Rosa Sasazuka property before all of you started taking action. Because it was sudden, I paid a large sum, but although I look like this, I actually have a large business, so every housing agent happily agreed to my request.”

Although they were a little curious about the details of the landlady’s business, from the fact that Shiba was a Sephirah, and the vague details of her financial situation and the situation of her relatives from the conversations just now, it should be at a level which could not be comprehended by commoners.

“After seeing Maou and the others interact with their neighbours, the people of MgRonalds, Sasaki Chiho-san and Yusa-san, as long as they had no shortage of food, clothes and housing, not only did they have a safe personality, they would also actively get rid of the dangers from the foreign

world. Although I was nervous when I had to fix the apartment, after confirming that Ooguro-ya could help take care of them, I felt reassured.”

Knowing that he had been manipulated by the Sephirah from the beginning, Maou’s face hardened unhappily.

When heading to the beach house Ooguro-ya to work, from the start, Maou and the others had strictly sealed the referral tape sent by the landlady for a few days and did not watch it.

But after actually making the call, they also discovered that Amane and Ooguro-ya had not recruited any other employees other than Maou and the rest, thinking about it, whether it was the sea at that area, the beach house, or Amane, none of them were normal existences.

“I see. Such a bummer. Anyway, you used the great me in order to save yourself some trouble?”

Until now, Maou did get rid of the intruders from the foreign world, with Sarel being the first one, but all these actions were mainly for the sake of protecting his own way of living.

After knowing that all this was actually due to Shiba’s manipulations, it made him rather unhappy.

Shiba answered Maou's questioning which held a challenging tone with a composed expression.

“Didn't Maou-san want to protect Japan and your own lifestyle based on your own volition?”

“.....No, that's not what I meant.”

“I treated Maou-san and Ashiya-san as independent 'humans,' and judged that both of you were worth trusting, and Maou-san had always beautifully responded to my trust.”

“Sigh, although I don't want that to be said that by you, I do like Earth and Japan. My current lifestyle as well, even if I have to leave one day, I still spent my days rather happily. So..... it's about time the both of you clearly explain what you plan to do, right?”

Maou tried his best to keep his spirits up and glared at Lailah and Shiba in turn.

“Let me say this first, I'm in a very bad mood right now.”

“Of, of course, I have been waiting for this moment! Waiting for strong existences like you and Emilia to appear at the same time.....”

Lailah raised her head, and looked towards Maou in a pleading manner.

From that face, the sacred aura from when she healed Maou's wounds and guided him could no longer be felt.

As both cheeks on Lailah's face were completely swollen, asking her to exude a sacred aura at this time might be pushing it too much, but without considering this point, from her expression it can be felt that she had no more leeway.

Was the shock of being directly rejected by her daughter causing her to become like this, or were there other reasons.....

The ironic thing was, Maou, who had wanted to know Lailah's true intentions all along, completely lost interest after hearing what she carelessly said.

"In order to save the world..... in order to save Ente Isla..... your power is necessary....."

"Enough."

Suddenly being interrupted by Maou who had asked for the explanation, this caused Lailah to widen her eyes in surprise.

“Hey, Landlady-san.”

“What is the matter?”

“Urushihara can leave the hospital already right? Will his hair colour revert later?”

Looking towards Urushihara who had turned white in many places, including his hair, Maou asked this with his usual tone.

“Eh, wait, Satan.....?”

“Yes, when he leaves our side, it would revert.”

Although he did not know the principle behind it, Maou accepted this answer for the time being.

“I’m leaving now as well. Landlady-san, Amane-san, please allow Urushihara to return as soon as possible.”

“E-eh? Sa, Satan?”

“.....Demon King, you.....”

“Eh? What? You’re done talking? Since you’re going back, should we find a place for lunch first?”

“W-wait a moment.....”

After discovering that Maou suddenly wanted to have everyone go home, Lailah got up in surprise and planned to grab Maou’s hand, but Maou dodged her hand.

“Sa-Satan?”

“I don’t feel like listening anymore. I’m tired, so I’m going back for today. I still have work tomorrow after all.”

“Wa-wait a moment, why are you suddenly acting like this? This is not completely unrelated to you demons, you know?”

“Probably. But relating it to the things I heard earlier, rather than saying that it’s a ‘world crisis,’ it’s more like a crisis to the humans of Ente Isla right? If so, then we demons do not have to take this seriously at all.”

“No, it’s not like that! This also has.....!”

“I’ve already said that I don’t want to listen anymore, do you understand or not!?”

Maou’s stern, angry shout shook the whole hospital room, causing Lailah to flinch.

“Satan..... why?”

Maou ignored Lailah, who had a sorrowful expression on her face, spurred on by his legs which were still shaking due to the effect of ‘that photo’ and walked towards the door of the hospital room, compared to Suzuno, who was showing an expression of surprise, Acies followed behind Maou with an expression like she had not thought too much about anything.

“Right now, as long as I become serious, even Gabriel will not be a match for me. It’s your freedom if you want to enter and leave Nord’s place, but don’t come to mine.”

After placing his hand on the door, Maou barely shifted his gaze towards Lailah.

“Goodbye.”

The door closed with a ka-chak sound.

“De-Demon King, wait..... wah! Alsiel? What happened?”

Suzuno chased after Maou frantically, and seemed to have shouted something else when she left the hospital room.

“I don’t know what to say either.”

Even if she did not understand, Acies still planned to leave the hospital room.

“Acies!”

Shouting her name from behind, it was Nord’s voice.

“.....Father, I’m sorry.”

“I know. You’re definitely not staying here by your own choice.....”

“That’s wrong.”

Acies interrupted Nord’s words and said.

“Although I really disliked everything at the beginning, I like it right now, and I like everyone too.”

Acies turned back and looked at everyone in the room. Although it was not known if the ‘everyone’ she spoke of included Urushihara, who had collapsed in a dehydrated manner next to the machine which Acies was carelessly pressing on, either way, Acies shook her head in a rather lonely manner.

“Whether it was what Maou said, what Chiho said, or Emi’s feelings, I can understand all of it. I don’t hate Mother, but I also have never wished for her to do anything soon. It’s complicated.”

“Acies.....”

“.....Although I feel apologetic towards Mother, I still wish to spend a period of time with Maou and the others.”

“Acies? B-but you.....”

“I know. I know that. I won’t do stupid things. It’s just that..... I cannot stand on Mother’s side right now. Mother..... is also an angel.”

“.....Ugh!”

Acies looked towards Shiba after she said this.

“Mi-chan.”

“What is it?”

“I have become ‘a person’ right now, yes? Did Mi-chan do something?”

“.....Yes, I used the ‘last resort.’”

Shiba said in a rare hesitant manner.

“Because when you were in Ente Isla, you seemed to have been affected by Maou-san’s demonic magic and started to lean towards a bad direction.....”

“Although it might have been done on the spur of the moment at the beginning, Maou is the ‘Yadorigi’ I selected. Mi-chan doesn’t have any right to interfere.”

“.....You are right, I’m sorry. I meddled too much.”

“The one Mi-chan should take care of is the ‘Yesod’ of Mi-chan and the rest. I.....”

Acies turned quickly, and ran out of the hospital room in order to chase after Maou and the others.

“am going to return to Maou.”

After expressing what she wanted to say as well as her resolution in front of Lailah, who made a rare appearance, everyone left one by one.

In the end, only Shiba, Amane, Nord, the dehydrated Urushihara, and Lailah were left.

“Why.....”

In the end, Lailah lost voice did not reach the ears of Maou who had to lift up the spasming Ashiya after he walked into the corridor and took the lift, and had Acies catch up with him later.

※

After that day, Maou made it a point not to ask about what Chiho and Emerada did and said after they caught up with Emi.

On the surface, Emi and Chiho were acting like normal, and even acted like the incident in Urushihara's hospital room had never happened, so Maou never raised this topic again.

According to Ashiya's intel, Nord seemed to have taken Lailah to Eifuku a few times, but from how Emi was acting, both parties probably did not meet at all.

Riding on Dullahan II, Maou went home as usual, and climbed the common stairs of the apartment as usual.

Although the lights of Nord's room downstairs were turned on, he did not care about who was inside at all.

After returning home, what greeted Maou was the dinner Ashiya made and Urushihara's back.

This was Maou's normal life.

This was the appearance of the small Demon Fortress which he had built up in Japan.

Right now, this was enough.

But, some extra things were mixed into this place tonight.

“It’s so late, what are you doing here?”

Suzuno was waiting for him here.

“Lailah came today. Together with Shiba-dono and Gabriel.”

“Oh. Ashiya, what’s for dinner tonight?”

Maou answered like he was not concerned about it at all.

“Currently it’s fried tofu and miso soup. If you think it’s not enough, I can prepare the frozen tofu burger immediately.”

“There’s no need, I did have a good rest today, so I’ll have a light dinner.”

“Understood. I will reheat it for you immediately.”

“Because you don’t seem to want to listen to her, I also hardened my heart and chased her away.....”

“Why do you accommodate us so well?”

“T-that’s because.....”

Suzuno momentarily turned red for unknown reasons, but immediately straightened her posture like she suddenly remembered something.

B-because it feels like once I heard it, I would agree with the thoughts of the other party.....”

“You’re the inquisitor anyway, so it should be fine, right? The other party is a Holy Angel after all.”

“Erhm, although..... it is like that..... then, let me ask you something instead.”

Suzuno’s face was still a little red, after Ashiya prepared dinner in an efficient manner, he placed the cutlery on top of the kotatsu.

“Why are you so determined in not listening to Lailah!?”

“Hey, you should consider the time. You’ll disturb the people downstairs.”

“Uh..... what exactly are you thinking.....”

Nord lived downstairs, and Lailah might be together with him.

Although it was not known where Lailah lived, it can at least be confirmed that she lived somewhere near Shinjuku.

On one hand, Maou was showing Lailah an extremely cold attitude, on the other hand, just like a normal apartment resident, he was careful not to disturb the neighbours.

In actual fact, the Demon King, who did not want to listen to the other party, and the archangel, who hoped that the other party would listen to her, were only separated by tatami and a ceiling, things which could not be considered physical obstructions, this was also a very strange situation.

“I really don’t understand you.”

Suzuno, sitting up straight, secretly clenched her fist which was resting on her thigh and exhaled forcefully.

“Honestly, at that place, I had already finished what I wanted to say. Although I truly do not want to hear what she wanted to say, but from the direction of the conversation, you should be able to guess what she wanted to say next, right.”

“What she wanted to say next?”

“Firstly, it would be Emi and me. Of course, there would be you, Emerada, Ashiya, and Urushihara, depending on the situation, perhaps even Amane-san and Alberto were also included, either way she would want everyone to work together to rescue Ente Isla from its crisis, right? Although we don’t know what kind of crisis it is.”

“Ugh, that’s true.....”

“Then, Ente Isla’s crisis is closely related to Alas=Ramus, Acies, and Iron, and it’s probably having to find a way to solve the problem about the Sephirah right? If so, then Emi and I, who are considered the ‘Yadorigi’ will definitely be involved. These kind of words, do you think there is a need to hear them?”

“If you ask me if there is a need or not, from my standpoint, I can only say that there is a need.”

“From my standpoint, I can only say there is no need.”

Maou smiled and answered thus.

“.....”

“Sorry for the wait, Demon King-sama.”

Urushihara stared at the computer and did not say anything, Ashiya placed the dishes in front of Maou.

“Because the extinction of the humans of Ente Isla is a welcome development for us. If what Landlady-san said was true, then we just have to bear with it for a few hundred years right? Although it might be a little useful to bring humans under our control, continuing the battle would be difficult and troublesome after all, if I have to choose a side, then I would rather stand on the side of Ente Isla’s destruction. Ah, I’m digging in.....”

“.....”

Maou, who sounded like he truly meant what he said, started to eat, and Suzuno looked at the side of his face in a doubtful manner.

“If she only listened to these words, she might have felt that they were very cruel.

Regretfully, since the one speaking was the Demon King, the contents could not be considered unnatural.

But, Suzuno already knew.

His true personality. Suzuno's thoughts would not be restricted by the name of Demon King Satan or Maou Sadao, based on his true personality, those words just now could not be taken at face value.

Behind those words, there must be other meanings.

Suzuno did not agree, and just waited for Maou's next sentence.

Even if afterwards, Maou drank miso soup, widened his eyes because the fried tofu was unexpectedly hot, and added two more bowls of rice, Suzuno still looked at the side of his face.

“.....You're really persistent.”

“This is part of my personality.”

“I won't say anything more you know.”

“Although you're not a liar, you're not an honest person either. Not just me, everyone also knows this.”

“Yes yes yes, thank you for your compliment. Hurry up and go back. A girl staying in a guy’s room until such a late time, there should be a limit even when breaking the commandments.”

“With things as they are now, what is so concerning about this?”

“.....If all this were heard by Sasaki Chiho, it should be very scary right? Why isn’t this a matter of concern?”

“.....Stop with the jokes. Recently, Bell has been a little strange.”

Ignoring the two guys whispering behind him, Maou sighed deeply.

“I don’t wish to be responsible for other people’s lives.”

“What did you say?”

In his own style, Maou used what Kawada said.

“To me, regardless of whether it is for the sake of the humans of Ente Isla, or listening to what Lailah says, it would be the same, anyway, no matter what reason you shove to me, I have no reason to take action.”

Suzuno still did not agree unnecessarily, and showed a gaze that she was carefully thinking deeply about every sentence Maou said.

“That person saved me before, and it’s not like I’m completely ungrateful, but there is no need to allow her to make use of this gratitude too much.”

“.....”

“Even if you show that kind of expression, I will not say anything more. I really only have these reasons.”

“.....Looks like it’s really like that huh.”

Although Suzuno looked directly at Maou’s face for some time, after a short while she moved her gaze away like she had given up and stood up.

“If so, then what’s wrong with me.”

“That’s why I said that there was no need to accommodate me.”

“Because Emilia and Chiho-dono are all like this. Since the temporary decided master of your two friends have already said this, then I wish to adopt the same policy as everyone. My job at the Church doesn’t help when

changing jobs, so just in case, I need to solidify my chances in the new career of Demon General.”

“This doesn’t seem like something an inquisitor should say.”

“I apologise for the disturbance.”

Just as Suzuno showed a mocking smile, put on her straw sandals and prepared to leave room 201—

“Suzuno, are you familiar with metallurgy?”

Behind her, Maou threw out a completely unexpected question.

“Metallurgy?”

Suzuno turned around in surprise.

“Are you referring to working night shifts? Or the process of smelting metal from mineral ore?”

(T/N: In Japanese, working night shifts sounds the same as metallurgy.)

Although it was easier to link Maou to working night shifts, it did not seem to be the case this time.

“When the Demon King Army was first formed, that was the first time I received a weapon made from iron.”

“So what?”

“Iron is considered an important metal in human history right? Iron is harder than rock or copper, and was enough to completely overthrow the existence of ancient societies right?”

“Yeah, it is like that.....”

Unable to understand the meaning behind Maou’s words, Suzuno replied in a troubled manner while standing at the porch.

In reality, there were records in Ente Isla of a certain ancient country which had iron weapons ruling the local area, and even Earth had preserved records of the Westerners forming the earliest age of iron weapons and changing history during the 15th century BC.

But metallurgy and iron weapons, how are they related to those words said earlier?

“But, it was really difficult to promote the concept of ‘maintenance.’ In the beginning, this caused a lot of iron made weapons to get broken because they were used too much.”

“Like I said, so what?”

Getting halted and listening to these ramblings caused Suzuno to show some impatience—

“It’s nothing, I’m done talking. I just suddenly thought of it. Sorry about that.”

Then, Maou suddenly ended the topic, causing her to feel disappointment.

“What exactly do you want to say?”

“It’s not much, I just feel that no matter what, everything would need maintenance. Isn’t the delivery going to begin very soon, because I have to ride a Moped, I thought of this. But for the way you and I rode the Mopeds in Ente Isla, it has already greatly exceeded the issue of maintenance.”

The two Mopeds belonging to Suzuno which were used in the expedition to Ente Isla to save Emi—the Honda GYRO ROOFs had not returned to Japan.

After going through Maou's and Acies's reckless driving, the vehicles were destroyed in the Eastern Continent royal capital Azure Sky Canopy, although Alberto happily guaranteed that he would be responsible for collecting all the parts, until today, he had not returned those parts.

Without considering that these things were made in a cultural circle rather far away from Ente Isla, whether Alberto could even differentiate the Moped parts was also a problem, with things as they were now, Maou and Suzuno were unable to personally go to Azure Sky Canopy to take those things back.

“In the end, the manpower for the delivery service seems to be insufficient. Since Lailah had already appeared, then Nord no longer needs a bodyguard right? You should come to work at MgRonalds too.”

“Please allow me to decline. A business smile does not match my personality. I'm good at showing a stern expression instead.”

“Such a waste.”

“.....If, if a human male said that, I-I could still honestly feel happy about it.”

“Although she's honestly feeling happy right now?”

“Stop messing around.”

“Good, goodbye!”

Hearing the irritating voices of Urushihara and Ashiya, Suzuno frantically left room 201.

“Hahaha.”

Maou saw Suzuno off with a laugh, and turned back towards Ashiya and Urushihara.

“Right now, there is nothing important for us to do. What we should do now is to maintain our current living environment and scale new heights in Japan. Am I right?”

“You are correct, Demon King-sama.”

Maou reminded the both of them again, and although Ashiya felt something was off, he still nodded exaggeratedly.

“Why is everyone only thinking of maintaining the current situation. Sigh, I don’t care either way.”

There was nothing more unnatural than ‘an improved level of stagnation within stagnation,’ Urushihara brazenly mumbled about the current situation.

Chapter 2: Hero, Starting to Search for a New Path

勇者、新たな道を探しはじめ



Evening. Chiho, who had finished her club activities and planned to go home, felt a little troubled when she noticed that her mobile phone was showing an unfamiliar number.

“Hello.....?”

She nervously pressed the call button after letting it ring three times—

“Hello~~ is this Sasaki-san~~?”

“Ah, Emerada-san! What a surprise! Is anything the matter?”

Chiho did not know that Emerada too owned a mobile phone. Just as she told herself that she should remember to get the other party’s mail address, Emerada asked an unexpected question.

“I apologise for calling you so suddenly~~ actually, I want to ask you something...”

“Go ahead?”

“Do you know Emilia’s whereabouts~~?”

“.....Eh? Her whereabouts?”

Chiho subconsciously stopped walking and shouted this in surprise.

“Actually, since two days after we met Lailah~~ in Lucifer’s hospital room~~ she had not returned home at all~~”

“Eh? Since two days after that day? Eh?”

Chiho did not understand what Emerada meant very well.

“Are you referring to her not going home?”

“She had not returned home at all~~ it’s already been three consecutive days since she said that she was going to work.....”

“Wait a moment? But including yesterday, Yusa-san had shifts for three consecutive days.”

“Eh?”

Emerada sucked a breath on the other side of the phone.

“I also saw her normally yesterday..... and when we went back, we said goodbye to each other at Sasazuka station like normal. Yusa-san did take the train back.”

“E-ehhhh~~? Why is it like that~~?”

It seemed like Emerada had fallen into confusion because of Chiho’s reply.

“I heard that Nord-san and Suzuno-san did accompany Lailah-san to go to Yusa-san’s house..... don’t tell me she was also not around on that day?”

“That day..... she should have gotten off work in the evening~~ but still did not return home in the end~~”

“She was already not around..... on that day?”

Chiho recalled that there was a day before Urushihara was discharged from the hospital where she had brought food to Villa Rosa Sasazuka, only to discover that she had made a wasted trip.

“Did you try calling Yusa-san? This number, it should be from Emerada-san’s mobile phone right?”

“That’s right~~ this is the one Emilia wanted me and Alberto wanted to keep with us when we first came to Japan..... of course, I have called her before~~ but she did not pick up at all..... did Emilia go to work today~~?”

“Eh, eh, please wait a bit.”

Chiho, unable to grasp the situation as well, took out the most recent two-week shift schedule from the notebook in her bag and skimmed through it quickly.

“Ah, she’s resting today.”

“Eh~~”

Emerada let out a sound like she did not know what to do.

If Emi had a shift today, then they could just wait for her at MgRonalds – but since she was not going, then they would not grasp her whereabouts for the whole day today.

Emi did not even say anything to her most trusted comrade Emerada, and left her apartment in Eifuku, what is going on?

If Emerada's words were to be believed, then this should be an effect of the incident with Lailah, but even so, Emi should have no reason to hide her tracks without even telling Emerada anything.

If it was because she did not want to meet with Lailah, according to Emi's personality, she should have chosen to reject this herself, or explain things to Emerada first.

Chiho recalled what happened when she ran out of Urushihara's hospital room to chase after Emi.

※

“N-not here~~ where did she go.....”

“This way!”

Just as Emerada was looking left and right outside the hospital, holding her mobile phone with one hand, Chiho ran towards the direction of Yoyogi station without any hesitation.

“H-how do you know~~? Does that mean that she wants to take the train~~?”

“That’s not confirmed yet! But Yusa-san did walk towards the direction of the station..... ah?”

After Chiho ran up the slope leading towards JR Yoyogi station, she shouted suddenly and stopped.

“It accelerated..... she might have gotten on a taxi.”

This time, Emerada stared at Chiho’s face in shock, without noticing this, Chiho gripped her mobile phone and looked far away.

“From the intersection in front of the station..... it should be around there.”

Although Chiho accurately pointed out Emi’s movements in the midst of the tall buildings—

“W-where is she going. Is she returning to Eifuku..... this is the way towards Eifuku?”

For reasons unknown, although she was able to trace Emi’s location, she could not confirm Emi’s destination.

“Ah, no way, it’s too far. I’m getting dizzy.”

After a short while, Chiho exhaled like she had given up and closed the mobile phone in her hand.

“.....Yusa-san probably took a taxi home. Emerada-san, you’re staying at Yusa-san’s home right?”

“Y-yeah..... but, but Sasaki-san, what did you do just now~~? It doesn’t seem like you figured out Emilia’s destination not by deduction~~ but felt her presence~~”

Chiho showed the pink mobile phone in her hand to Emerada and smiled in a troubled manner.

“Although it can only be used in emergency situations..... just now, I used the mobile phone to activate Idea Link.”

“Idea Link?”

Emerada got a shock.

“I traced Yusa-san while sending messages to her mobile phone, but it got cut off because the distance was too far.”

“Sa-Sasaki-san, you learned to use Idea Link? H-how did you manage it? Sasaki-san is from Japan right?”

From the way Emerada spoke, it could be seen how shocked she was.

“Yusa-san and Suzuno-san, as well as Sariel-san, taught me a lot, so I managed to learn it.”

“Sariel? Are you referring to Archangel Sariel? The one who acted violently towards Emilia before and is currently working near Emilia and the Demon King’s workplace? W-why would he do such a thing?”

Emerada’s surprise did not dissipate at all. Just Chiho, who logically should not have any holy magic, being able to use Ente Isla’s spell—Idea Link—was already surprising enough, adding on the fact that she learned it with the assistance of Emi, Suzuno, and Sariel, Emerada was unable to imagine what actually happened in the past.

“Before Yusa-san was taken to Ente Isla, many things happened.”

Chiho explained in a rather embarrassed manner.

“Because I cannot avoid being considered Maou-san’s and Yusa-san’s weakness by the angel and demon factions, in order to be able to ask for help

immediately during crucial moments, I took the initiative to ask them to teach me.”

“I- I see~~”

Emerada seemed to finally recover from her initial surprise.

“But, but you’re really amazing~~ although your determination is not that simple~~ but Idea Link is a high level spell~~ if it was in the Sorcery Institution~~ it would normally require one year in order to learn it~~”

Emerada’s generous praise caused Chiho to smile shyly, but she immediately spoke in a normal manner,

“No, don’t mind me. The important one right now is Yusa-san. Yusa-san should have gone home. Let’s go quickly.”

“B-but~~ what should we say to her.....”

“For this kind of thing, we can think of it after we meet!”

Chiho pulled the hand of Emerada, who still felt lost, and ran towards the station once again.

Unfortunately for Chiho, who was still a high school girl, and Emerada, who was from Ente Isla, taking a taxi was still unknown territory, so taking the train was the safest and most confirmed method.

“Sa-Sasaki-san~~ your personality appears to have changed~~?”

Continuously getting pulled by the hand of a girl younger than her caused Emerada to smile subconsciously, as she thought of what happened when she first came to Japan.

The Chiho from that time was involved in the commotion related to Ente Isla, and was a normal girl who would be troubled and flustered over the distance between her and the person she likes.

But right now she could not see the doubt from that time from the girl who was pulling her.

“But if I don’t become a little stronger mentally, I will not catch up to Maou-san and Yusa-san!” Chiho replied simply while being short of breath.

A strange sense of stubbornness and reliability could be sensed from the young girl’s back—

“.....For Emilia to have a friend like you, that’s really great.....”

Emerada truly thought so from the bottom of her heart.

“What did you say?”

“Nothing~~ then again~~ Sasaki-san~~ can you turn into that alleyway for a bit~~?”

“Eh? That alleyway?”

“That’s right~~ I remembered a shortcut~~”

Emerada pointed towards a direction that led away from the station, although Chiho felt doubtful, she still turned into a road which was used to go to the other side of the main road and was not wide enough for two cars.

Just as both their figures disappeared into the alleyway—

“Kyaaa.....”

Chiho’s scream sounded across the high-rise area of Yoyogi and flew towards the faraway sky.

✱

After that, just as Chiho predicted, Emi did return to her apartment at Eifuku.

Of course, Lailah's appearance did give her a huge shock. But even so, Emi still seriously lectured Emerada and Chiho who ignored the risk of being seen by others and flew into the sky.

Thanks to that, it was only until Chiho returned home did she realize that it was the first time she went to Emi's home.

Although having such thoughts during an emergency situation was rather rude, at the same time, Chiho did have thoughts about wanting to see more of Emi's daily life, anyways, Emi acted so normal to the point that Chiho could think about such things later.

Of course, even if Emi showed a normal attitude, that did not mean that her mental state was like that as well.

However, because Emi who had turned up for work like normal the next day really acted like normal, Chiho became careless.

But, considering Emi's personality and current situation, it was difficult to imagine that she would hang around in business hotels or web cafes by herself.

If so, there would be limited choices.

After Chiho looked at Emi's arranged work times, and nodded once.

“.....I have thought of one possibility, I'm going to investigate a bit, can you wait for me for a while?”

“I understand~~ sorry for the trouble~~”

After listening to Emerada's depressed reply, Chiho hung up for the time being.

Then, she did not think too much about it, and searched for a name recorded inside her phonebook, and called the other party's phone.

“Ah, hello? I'm Sasaki. Actually Yusa-san appears to have not gone home.....”

“Urk!”

The other party on the other end of the line, let out a cry of surprise before Chiho asked the question.

“.....From this sound, it seems like..... you know where Yusa-san went. Is that right Suzuki-san?”

Although Chiho did not do it intentionally, it appeared that she still scared the other party.

From the other side of the phone, the hesitant aura from Suzuki Rika could be felt.

Rika, as Emi's ex-colleague, was also dragged into the affairs of Ente Isla just like Chiho, and knew many truths about Maou and Emi.

Emotionally, Emi seemed to rely a lot on Rika, so Chiho believed that Emi would most likely go to Rika.

“This is troublesome. Chiho-chan, can you wait until tomorrow?”

Next, Rika started to say some strange things.

At this moment, Chiho suddenly had a feeling that perhaps Emi was not at Rika's house after all.

“.....I’m alright with that, but not saying anything to Emerada-san isn’t that good after all. Perhaps some things are inconvenient to say because their relationship is very close, but even if approval was given beforehand, it would still feel strange to open the fridge belonging to others right?”

“Hahaha, you’re right. I really feel apologetic towards Emerada-chan.”

The feeling of Rika giving a wry smile was transmitted from the other end of the line.

“I heard many things. That child seemed to have encountered something very painful. I heard that she found her mother?”

“Yeah. But I don’t know if that can be considered being found or not.”

Because she deduced that Emi already told Rika most of the things, Chiho answered honestly.

“Then, although I grasped most of the situation, honestly speaking, I feel that this kind of thing needs to be seriously settled once and for all.”

Of this too, Chiho knew it very well.

Lailah's appearance was very dramatic, but when thinking about whether any huge changes occurred in Emi's or Maou's life, the answer would be definitely not.

At most, it would be just listening to her revealing why she had to hide and act in the shadows, and clear up some unanswered questions.

Chiho did have a vague understanding that Lailah did have a huge goal, and in order to achieve that goal, she needed the help of Emi and Maou, who possessed huge power.

But.....

“Currently, Emi shouldn't have anything she needs to do urgently right?”

That was the way things were.

Emi's final goal was to fight Maou, Ashiya, and Urushihara, and what made Chiho happy was that recently, Emi frequently caused other people to suspect how serious she was about 'challenging the Demon King.'

She successfully reunited with her father whom she thought she would never see again, and also paid off all the favours she owed Maou when she was imprisoned in Ente Isla by Olba.

During the commotion in the Ente Isla Eastern Continent, the Malebranche clan, the main fighting forces of the Demon World after the defeat of Demon King Satan, had also become more abiding. In addition, Heaven, who had been randomly obstructing Emi, Maou, and the others, cut off contact with the Earth on their own. This had already been witnessed by Shiba and Gabriel.

Right now, Sarel was only interested in a future with Kasaki Mayumi, and Gabriel, faced with the powers of Shiba, Amane, and Maou, was already completely suppressed.

Moreover, Emi had encountered a new workplace which could guarantee her life in Japan and earn her living expenses.

With this, what Emi should do now, was to only work hard to live her life every day.

Of course, even if the enemies in front of them had disappeared, this did not mean that there would be no threats at all in the future.

However, Emi currently had many reliable comrades at her side, and had made perfect preparations to quickly respond no matter what happened.

At this point, even if Emi wanted to completely stop fighting, and rebuild an agricultural life with her father in her hometown in Ente Isla, it would not be a problem at all, and the reason why she had not done so was mainly because of Maou's existence.

Maou did not plan to leave Japan, so Emi did not leave Japan and return to Ente Isla.

“.....Ugh.”

“Chiho-chan? What's wrong?”

“Eh? Ah, it's nothing.....”

After making sense of Emi's situation in her mind, Chiho discovered something subtle.

In Emi's heart, the goal of 'defeating the Demon King' was slowly becoming an empty shell.

The reason why Emi did not stop or give up on this goal was because the Demon King Army led by Maou did not just cause Emi suffering, but also caused most of the citizens in Ente Isla to suffer, and Emi felt that these actions should be punished.

But even so, compared to before, Emi's personal animosity towards Maou had obviously weakened, to the point where she was starting to lean towards the situation where everyone was harmoniously living together like what Chiho desired.

But if this situation was to be explained in a simpler manner, it would be 'Emi was staying in Japan because of Maou.'

This caused Chiho's feelings to waver greatly.

“Ah~ yeah, Chiho-chan's feelings should be quite complicated right. Although I only roughly heard about it, but Emi's hatred towards Maou-san seemed to have decreased a lot compared to before.”

“T- that doesn't matter! The situation is better like this!”

Although nobody was watching, Chiho still could not help but blush.

Although she had carelessly forgotten, not only did this older sister have sharp senses, she also liked to liven things up.

And from how Rika could make this kind of analysis, Emi seemed to have honestly told Rika many things without withholding anything.

“Sigh~ onee-san thinks that for those things, you just have to do what you want.”

“What do you mean by those things?”

If Rika was standing in front of her, she would definitely tease Chiho, who had puffed up her cheeks without any restraint.

“Don’t mind that. Then, anyway rather than defeating Maou-san right now, Emi is leaning more towards setting him aside right? Or more accurately, her goal has started to become vague.”

“Y- yeah, that’s right.”

“If stubborn parents who will only cause trouble for others suddenly appear at this kind of time, of course she would feel irritated about it, although Emi does not bear any responsibilities, her mother whom she had never met suddenly jumped out and acted like she was pushing debts which were accumulated from unknown places onto her, Emi does not need to be affected by the other party at all.”

Perhaps because this example resembled their daily lives too closely, it felt as if it became very easy to understand.

“Then, although I might be able to listen to her complaints and troubles, for someone who would understand the situation, my thoughts will lean towards Emerada no matter what. Because I know she has very powerful abilities, within my mind, I still feel that the ability needs to be used on some place.”

“Yeah, about that..... I might be the same as well.”

“Although I did use money as an example just now, Emi’s mother isn’t as bad as those people like Olba and the angels right? I think she is leaning more towards ‘Hero Emilia, in order to save the world, we need your power,’ that kind of thing.”

“That, I feel that it should be close you what you said,” after remembering what Shiba said in Urushihara’s hospital room, Chiho nodded and replied.

“But, currently Emi is not obligated to listen to those words, and she doesn’t have the emotional capacity for it either.”

“That’s right.”

“Therefore, I feel that what Emi needs to focus on right now is not work, but to create a situation where she can keep herself busy for the sake of the important things in her life.”

“Create a situation where Yusa-san can keep herself busy for the sake of the important things in her life?”

Chiho was confused by Rika’s roundabout explanation, and the latter snickered like she had seen through Chiho’s situation.

“Chiho-chan, are you free later?”

“Eh? Ah, I’m free, I don’t have to work today.....”

“Then, when this phone call has ended, I will message you to tell you where Emi is, you can just ambush her directly, the current timing is perfect, if the other party is Chiho, the person over there would probably welcome you, many interesting things will definitely happen.”

“Eh? Ah, alright, b-but what do you mean by perfect timing? The person over there refers to?”

“You’ll know when you get there, Chiho-chan should be in second year of high school now right?”

“Yes, that’s right.....”

How did her year of schooling relate to Emi?

“Even if you don’t rush there, Emi will not run away, so please ask Emerada to bear with it for another half a day, you can contact her after you and Emi have met, then, I’ll send you the message immediately after I hang up.”

“Ah, alright, thank.....”

Before Chiho could finish her sentence, Rika had hung up.

“So fast.”

Then, less than 30 seconds after the phone was hung up, Rika’s message had been sent.

This speed was so fast that it made one suspect that Rika had already guessed that Chiho would contact her and had prepared the message in advance.

But after reading the contents of the message, Chiho became confused once more.

“.....Where is this?”

It looked like a private address.

After trying to search for the address, Chiho discovered that it was the fourth floor of an apartment near Zoshigaya station. Setting off from Sasazuka, she would need to take the Koei line, which was connected to the Koei Shinjuku line, to Shinjuku Sanchome station, then transfer to the Tokyo Metro's Fukutoshin line.

But the person's name which was written alongside the address was a name which Chiho did not know.

“Shimizu Maki-san.....?”

“Is this the place?”

Close to six in the evening, when the late autumn sun was close to setting completely, Chiho found a small reinforced concrete apartment near Tokyo Metro's Zoshigaya station and Tokyo Toden's Kishibojinmae station.

“COMFORT building room 401, it's this place, right?”

Chiho confirmed the address and the name of the building, and pressed the automatic door's intercom, unfortunately, the mailbox outside did not have any nameplates which would help to distinguish the occupant's last name.

“Coming~”

Accompanied by some noise, an unfamiliar female voice was heard from the intercom.

“Er, erhm, is this Shimizu-san’s house?”

“That’s right, may I know who you are?”

Chiho asked in an unsure voice, the voice on the other side of the intercom also exuded a wary aura.

“Erhm, my last name is Sasaki, I heard from Rika-san that Yusa Emi-san is here.”

“Ah, ahh, ahhhh!”

Once Rika’s name was mentioned, the voice which had some noise mixed in suddenly became louder.

“Yes yes yes, I heard, I heard! I’m opening the door now! Yusa-san! Sasaki-senpai is here!”

Ka cha.

“Ah.”

Just as she thought that the voice of the other party was very agitated, the call was cut off, and since the automatic door had opened, it meant that she could enter, right?

“‘Senpai’?”

As she could not predict what would happen next, Chiho panicked momentarily.

Although she could confirm that Emi was here, she did not know who the lady called Shimizu was.

After Chiho took the lift up to the 4th floor, she immediately found the target room.

Similarly, there were no nameplates hung here, it was probably for the purpose of preventing crime.

After adjusting her breathing, Chiho pressed down on the intercom in front of the room.

“Welcome!”

There was an immediate reaction from the other side of the door.

A female slightly older than Chiho opened the porch door like she had waited for a long time, and welcomed Chiho with a huge smile.

“Wah! It’s really just like what Rika-san said! So cute!”

“Er- erhm, it’s, it’s nice to meet you, I’m Sasaki Chiho.”

“Nice to meet you, hello! Alright, come in quickly! Yusa-san! A very cute senior is here!”

“Er, er, erhm.....”

Like Chiho was being sucked in by a vacuum cleaner, she was brought into the room by the female who seemed to be the room owner.

“Ah.”

“Sorry for making you worry.”

“Chi-nee chan, ‘allo!”

It was a western style apartment inside, Chiho’s gaze met with Emi, who was sitting on the sofa and looking over in a shameful manner, and Alas=Ramus, who was on the sofa playing with a Rilakkuma toy.

“Yusa-san!”

Chiho who was pulled indoors, took the opportunity to run towards Emi.

“I got a fright! I heard from Emerada that you didn’t go home! Because you came to work as usual, I didn’t know at all.....”

“Yeah, sorry, I seemed to have become self-defeating.”

Emi used an excuse which did not seem like her, and from how she did properly go to work, this should be an action she was very sure about. Although it could not be understood why Emi would do something which would make Emerada worry, Chiho first sighed with relief.

“Seriously..... Maou-san and I are fine with it, but you should at least tell Emerada-san first. Emerada-san shouldn't be the kind of person who wouldn't understand Yusa-san's current feelings, right?”

“Yeah, I am reflecting on that, when I return, I will apologise to her properly.”

Emi lowered her head in compliance.

Chiho was relieved because she knew Emi did not cause any trouble, but about why Emi was in this kind of place, and who Shimizu Maki, the owner of this room, was, Chiho had no idea about this at all.



Perhaps she noticed Chiho's expression, Emi pointed behind Chiho.

“She, Shimizu-san..... Maki, when I was working at Docodemo, she was my.....”

“Colleague!”

“Colleague!”

Coordinating with Maki, Alas=Ramus also interrupted energetically.

“Yusa-san really took care of me a lot!”

“I-I see.....”

It looked like Maki had a cheerful personality, and that she was a lively girl with such a strong personality that could overwhelm others.

Even if Rika could also be considered as having a cheerful personality, what Maki exuded was of higher level than hers, to the point that her liveliness could be called hot blooded.

“I have heard things about Sasaki-senpai from Yusa-san. I’m Shimizu Maki, please take care of me!”

“P-please take care of me. Erhm, I’m sorry, Shimizu-san should be older than me..... right? Why are you calling me Senpai?”

Chiho, whose hand was suddenly grabbed in a forceful manner, asked in a surprised tone.

“Ah, rather than saying that it’s Maki’s personality, it’s more like a bad habit of hers.”

“Saying that it’s a bad habit is too mean.”

Maki smiled while pouting and turned towards Chiho, whose hand she was still holding.

“The amount of guidance and help which Yusa-san and Rika-san gave me has already exceeded the normal level of how much a senior would do for a junior in the workplace, although the two of them did not allow me to address them as Senpai, Sasaki-san is Yusa-san’s senior at her current workplace right? Then you’re a Senpai to me.”

“Eh? E-erhm, this is very troubling for me!”

What in the world is this person saying. It felt as if the topics could not be linked up at all.

“So didn’t I say so before, stop teasing her, Chiho-chan has a very serious personality, if someone like you who is older than her calls her Senpai, she would feel very troubled.”

“Eh~ but~”

Maki’s face was still full of smiles.

“Although she might be a high school student, since she can be praised by Yusa-san, that means that she’s actually very amazing right?”

“How you wish to interpret things is your freedom, but I feel that there is a problem with Maki’s method of expression.”

“Yusa-san, what did you talk about with Shimizu-san?”

“It shouldn’t be beyond the level of a casual chat..... but Maki would occasionally become strangely direct.”

Faced with the troubled Chiho, Emi guilty put her palms together and apologized.

“In addition, I also remembered Rika-san occasionally mentioning things about you, she said that amongst the friends whom she recently became acquainted with, there was a very amazing high school girl, this is referring to Sasaki-senpai right?”

“Is- is that so, I’m not sure if I’m amazing or not.....”

“Since Yusa-san and Rika-san have both said this, then it’s normal for me to feel that I shouldn’t be rude!”

“Sigh.”

It seemed it would be more correct to simply treat the ‘normal’ mentioned here like it was an exclamation mark used for emphasis.

“That’s how it is, please allow me to address you as Sasaki-senpai.”

“Please spare me, I don’t want someone older than me to use honorifics or call me Senpai for no reason!”

“Then please allow me to use my privileges as an older person to address you as Sasaki-senpai!”

“Yusa-san! What is wrong with this person!”

“Sorry, Chiho-chan, Maki has been acting all worked up for these past two or three days.”

Faced with the tenacious Maki, Chiho finally surrendered.

“Because Yusa-san actually came to depend on me! If you do not respond properly, can I still be considered a woman! How can anyone not be excited by this!”

“I- I only came here in order to readjust my mood, and also to take the chance to ask some things.”

Emi turned to Chiho and spoke like she was using Maki’s feelings as an excuse.

“Maki, you’re scaring Chiho-chan like this, can you calm down a bit?”

“Ah, alright.”

Maki earnestly listened to Emi's words and sat down.

After Emi allowed Chiho, who seemed dependent on her, to calm down, she started to explain the situation.

“I'll make the introductions again. She is Shimizu Maki. She is a junior of me and Rika when working at Docodemo, right now, she is studying at Waseta University..... in second year right?”

(T/N: Waseta University probably refers to Waseda University.)

“Eh, Waseta?”

Before Maki could react, Chiho, hearing the name of a famous university, widened her eyes in surprise.

“It's nothing much. I was just forced by my parents to study there, I actually want to study at a music university more.”

“Eh, but, Waseta isn't the type of university which is easy to get into.....”
Chiho said anxiously.

Although it had been some time since universities entered a period where people could go to university as long as they took the entrance exam,

universities above a certain standard were still considered hurdles, and a considerable amount of effort was required to be admitted.

Waseto, located at Takadanobaba, should be one of those universities which required a considerable amount of effort to be admitted.....

“Because not considering the reason, I still did work very hard! Until high school, I have always been in Track and Field, so my personality leans towards a sportsperson, I hope you can understand that. Me acting like this is already considered exercising restraint.”

“Yeah.....”

Since she was a second year student, that meant that she was at least three years older than Chiho, so Chiho did not know how to respond to Maki, who insisted in using polite language when talking to her.

“At the beginning, she even treated Alas=Ramus as her senior.....”

Emi showed a gaze like she was thinking back.

“Since she is Yusa-san’s relative, then to me she is of the same seniority status as Yusa-san.”

Hearing Maki say this, Chiho knew how Emi explained Alas=Ramus's situation.

In other words, Maki did not know Emi's and Alas=Ramus's true identities, and Rika did not tell her anything either.

“And she's really cute!”

“No, Maki-nee-chan, don't take my Laklakkuma!”

The Rilakkuma toy Alas=Ramus was playing with should be Maki's personal item.

Maki picked up the Rilakkuma which was almost the same height as Alas=Ramus, planning to play with Alas=Ramus, but the latter rejected it mercilessly.

“She's really cute right!”

“Y-yeah.”

Although Chiho agreed that Alas=Ramus was very cute, it was hard to describe, it felt as if this tenacious liveliness which would not change no

matter how it was treated had some similar points to Sarel, who was smitten with Klsaki.

Thinking to this point, Chiho started to think that this might be the reason why Emi would be at Maki's house.

Seeing Chiho's side profile, Emi spoke softly, "For me, I came to ask Maki about university and exams."

"Eh?"

Emi's words caused Chiho a huge shock.

"D-does that mean that Yusa-san wants to attend a university in Japan?"

Chiho, realizing that saying 'a university in Japan' was too careless after she said it, looked towards Maki.

"That's mainly because Yusa-san studied at an overseas Church school in the past right. Although I felt that it is a pity that she did not study at a foreign university."

Maki naturally expressed an understanding at Chiho's surprised attitude, from this Chiho also knew how Emi explained her background to Maki.

When Emi was at McDonalds, she also explained that she came from overseas, most likely she had explained this to the people around her since she started working at Docodemo.

“The only person who I can discuss with and is studying in university is Maki.”

“It’s a huge honour!”

Maki showed a charming smile.

“Because that incident earlier caused me to feel very frustrated, in order to relieve my stress, I asked Maki to have a meal with me after work..... after that, I even got Maki to spend one day to bring me to the university she is studying at.”

“You can still enter the university even if you’re not a student?”

Although it was impossible for this to happen in schools at high school level and lower, if it was not in especially narrow or sealed places, most universities allowed external parties to enter and leave freely, and as long as they applied beforehand, they could even use some of the school facilities.

“Even if it would depend on the class schedule, some classes allow people to sit in. Although Yusa-san did not go so far as to do that, she did eat lunch at our university cafeteria today you know.”

“Eh?”

All this information caused Chiho to feel surprised and to think that it was all a novelty.

Although she knew that some private universities would hold open house activities during the high school future path consultation, she did not expect that universities would go so far as to allow external parties to freely enter and leave.

Based on what was commonly known for schools at the high school level and earlier, other than the students and their parents, people not connected to the school were unable to enter the school at all.

Perhaps she had experienced the same surprise as Chiho in the past—

“Sigh, I also only knew after I attended open house activities in my third year of high school.”

Maki nodded in a nostalgic manner.

“As long as someone has an education history equivalent to graduating from high school, they can apply to university no matter what age they are, cultural lectures are also normally held within the school for a small community, many businessmen, researchers, and students from other universities also enter and leave the grounds. Universities do not require uniforms like in middle or high school, other than the research facilities and libraries, basically anyone can enter and leave freely, but if it is those famous elite universities, it may not be like this.”

“Oh.....”

Chiho could only answer simply like this.

“Over there, anything looks very novel, it’s a happy feeling. The school cafeteria has cheap and delicious food, and there are many shops to choose from.”

“There are shops to choose from?”

“Other than convenience stores and student canteens, there are still cafes or those used by people like the professors, restaurants which are slightly more expensive, there are quite a lot of choices in our school.”

“.....”

As expected, there was only one student canteen in Sasahata High School, and most of the meals would be sold out at the beginning of lunch break.

Although Chiho only had a vague impression of ‘university life’ until now, most of what Maki said were things Chiho had never thought about before.

“Sigh, the only thing to worry about would be the beautiful Yusa-san being treated as a target by some frivolous guys whom we will occasionally meet, but luckily, Alas=Ramus has provided a protection like an impregnable fortress.”

Maki placed her hand under her chin, and showed a strange smile.

“D-does that mean flirt- flirting?”

Because she only had theoretical knowledge about this situation, Chiho asked this in a troubled manner.

“Yeah, about that. Although the term herbivore man has been popular for a long time, there are still carnivorous animals in university.”

“Wah.”

Although Maki did not confirm or deny anything when she replied, Chiho had learned one more fascinating thing about university.

“Sasaki-senpai will definitely have a hard time in university. During the period when clubs are holding their orientation, those guys in charge of recruiting members will rush towards cute girls like hungry vultures.”

Although she did not know what orientation meant, just having this small amount of information about university life instilled into her by Maki was enough for Chiho, who was already very surprised, to be even more confused.

But the next unexpected sentence from Maki immediately caused Chiho to calm down.

“Then again, I heard that Sasaki-senpai is in second year of high school now, at this time, you’re probably starting to feel sick of the people around you talking about future path all the time right?”

“Eh.....”

Then again, it felt as if it had been a long time since she heard anyone mentioning anything related to ‘future paths.’

No, for her high school life, it was already autumn of her second year, even if the number of people were small, there were people who had started to take action with university exams as their goal.

“Although this would sound strange coming from me as I did not go to my first choice of school, you might also feel that these are annoying adult opinions, if your sense of purpose is not strong enough, whether you are facing the exams or university life, you will not feel motivated, so you should still take the chance now to find what you want to do bit by bit, it would be better to list them out earlier as long as you have a slight interest.”

“What I want to do?”

At this moment, a wave of anxiety different from when being coerced by Maki started to rise within Chiho’s heart.

To Chiho, right now the most important thing was the wish that Maou, Ashiya, and Urushihara, as well as Emi, Suzuno, and Alas=Ramus could always live peaceful lives.

However, before that, Chiho was a second year high school student of Japan.

Second year high school students have things which second year high school students must do.

And as long as she lived normally like how she did now, Chiho would soon be promoted to third year of high school.

“Future path.....”

Once she was promoted to third year of high school, she had to do some concrete thinking about her future path.

Before obtaining her job at the McRonalds in front of Hatagaya station, Chiho had also been troubled over her future path, but the environment around her now was already completely different from that time.

Until now, she had always harbored a vague choice of going to university in her mind, but if she wanted to go to university, she would need to put in a corresponding amount of effort and time.

Amongst her seniors working at the McRonalds in front of Hatagaya station, there were some who left the store in order to seek employment.

One day, Chiho would need to allow exam preparations to take up most of her time.

If Chiho only wanted to go to university, it would not be difficult with Chiho's current results.

However, even if her situation was different from Maki's, if she attended university with such frivolous feelings, she would definitely regret it in the future.

And she also could not allow her parents to pay for her own empty university life.

Most importantly, if she chose her future path without working hard at all, she would lose her ability to stay by Maou's and Emi's side.

“Future path huh. It feels like it has become more confusing.”

Chiho, who finished thinking about these things, verbalized her thoughts which had not reached a conclusion.

“Then, does Yusa-san plan to go to Waseta University?”

Although Chiho could only ask this kind of vague question, Emi still laughed and shook her head.

“How is that possible, there's no way. I don't have money, and I borrowed the past year exam questions to look through them, and in the end, I didn't even understand what was written.”

“Past year exam questions..... erhm, can I take a look?”

“Go ahead, because I heard that Yusa-san is considering these things, so I brought them over from my childhood home, that’s right, it’s that red one.”

Chiho got up shakily, taking the book from the bookshelf in Maki’s apartment titled Waseta University Past Year Exam Questions Compilation, and after flipping through it for a while, smoke starting coming out from Chiho’s ears.

“This, this is.....”

Although it was not like she completely did not understand, she could not comprehend most of it. In fact, for some questions, she could not even decipher what they were trying to ask.

“No matter what, I haven’t been studying for a few years, I won’t be able to suddenly pass that kind of exam, and I’m not so serious about it to ‘study for the sake of attending university.’ I’m just a little interested in university life.”

“Yusa-san’s English is very good, I think as long as you work a little harder, you should be able to manage it.”

As Maki spoke, she slowly got up and took out a thin laptop computer in the corner of the apartment.

After starting up the new slim laptop, which was better than Urushihara's computer in terms of generation and features, Maki showed the screen to Emi.

“Now then, Yusa-san, the universities within the city which are very strong in majors related to agriculture are probably these.”

“Agriculture..... ah.”

That term caused Chiho to widen her eyes in surprise.

“When considering agriculture in the city, most people will think of Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, but Meiji University's Ikuta Campus also has an agricultural school, as for Fuso University, it would be harder to find majors unrelated to agriculture. In addition, even if they are categorized as agriculture, it can still be further categorized as Soil Life Science, Horticulture, City Policies, and other fields; as for national universities in Kitago and other places, there are also many interesting subjects, such as a Major in Livestock.”

“Oh, can I borrow it for a bit?”

“Go ahead, have a look here, every university can be accessed directly from the links.”

Emi started to use Maki’s laptop with 80% seriousness and 20% curiosity.

“Does Sasaki-senpai currently have any thoughts about your future path?”

“Eh?”

Suddenly being asked this question, Chiho almost dropped the Past Year Exam Questions Compilation.

“Uh, erhm, currently I have only thought of finding schools which are stronger in English related subjects.”

Chiho brought up the contents which she had wrote on her future path questionnaire on reflex, but she was not as serious as Emi, who was looking for agriculture related majors.

English was a knowledge which was being researched in many more areas compared to agriculture, to put it in a more extreme manner, all subjects were not completely unrelated to English.

“Do you plan to study abroad?”

“Study abroad? No, I haven’t thought so far! Although I have not thought so far.....”

Then for what reason did she want to learn English—although such a question formed in her mind, currently Chiho just wanted the ability to converse with the foreigners who came to the store.

“Could it be that you still don’t know what you want to do in the future, or what field you want to research on?”

“.....Something like that. I had thought I already freed myself from these kinds of troubles once.”

“I see.”

Maki nodded in understanding, and after glancing at Emi who was staring at the laptop screen, she went close to Chiho and said softly, “Although I only applied what I learned from someone.”

“Y-yeah.”

As Emi and Alas=Ramus were the only other people in the apartment, it was meaningless even if Maki lowered her volume to speak, in addition, for Emi to glance over at this time, it was also very startling.

“If you don’t know what you should do then, in order to be able to encounter what is truly important to you, I suggest that you first go to a place where you can expand your choices.”

“A place where I can expand my choices.....?”

“That’s right, when planning your life, Sasaki-senpai should not be the type of person who would think that it would be enough to find a man with a good income and marry him right, so since you don’t clearly know what you want to do, why don’t you study hard normally first, then before the deadline to submit your aspirations arrive, you can first start with the places which have high deviation value and versatility.”

(T/N: Deviation is used in Japan to measure the academic ability of the high school students, a higher number means that their academic ability is better)

“May I know what that means?”

Although she felt that there were some contradictions between what was said earlier and now, Chiho still encouraged Maki to continue speaking.

“For example, Wasetta does have a higher university reputation, even in lesser known universities with low deviation values, there are still majors in many schools which are able to carry out highly professional research. If you have a clear ambition, rather than being concerned about deviation values and reputation, it would be better going to places with better research environments, it would be easier to meet good comrades that way. Sigh, but if it’s Todai or Kyodai, it would be a completely different world, so is this understandable so far?”

(T/N: Todai is an abbreviation of University of Tokyo while Kyodai is an abbreviation of Kyoto University.)

“Y-yes, I roughly know what you mean, in addition, I have never considered Todai or Kyodai anyway.”

Although she knew that her results in school were considered rather good, to Chiho, Todai and Kyodai were already in places much further than Ente Isla.

“T-that’s true, anyway if you still haven’t found your future direction, you should go to a good school as much as possible, with this, when you find something which you want to do later, it would be easier to change tracks. Although this would be more roundabout than deciding your goal from the beginning, don’t you think this would be much better than not being able to walk down that path again?”

“That’s true.....”

Although she did not know what kind of experiences these words were based on, Maki's words, which were strangely agitated from the beginning to the end, touched Chiho's heart in a peculiar manner.

“Amongst my seniors, there was someone who had rejected a job offer from a huge bank, and it was a name of a bank which everyone had heard of and their ATMs can be seen on the streets. Although he would definitely get a high salary as long as he goes to work because it is a super famous industry, can be boasted about to family and friends, and even has chances to go overseas for work, that senior gave up on that place, and chose another company which he met by chance when he was job hunting. Which industry do you think he joined?”

“I-I don't know..... is it a local bank, or a large trading company?”

Chiho tried to list possible choices with her limited knowledge, but Maki shook her head.

“My senior went to a company manufacturing ship propellers, and is currently in Hiroshima grinding huge ship propellers. Simply put, it's the ship manufacturing industry.”

Even if she was mentally thinking how in the world would she be able to guess it, Chiho roughly understood what Maki wanted to convey.

“My senior seemed to have gotten criticism from his relatives for giving up on this great job at the huge bank. The university career office also came over to persuade my senior to reconsider, but he did not waver at all, and after saying ‘I’m going to support Japan’s ship manufacturing industry,’ he ran out. Some time back, my senior even mailed me to boast that he helped an Australian company build a propeller three stories high. From everyone else’s point of view, perhaps they only thought that he chose a path with decreased lifetime income in order to chase his dreams, but to get a job related to ships which he likes the most, and obtaining an environment where he can happily go to work every day, don’t you feel it’s a rare thing? Even if his salary is lower compared to working at a bank, it does not equate to being at a lower standard.”

Maki did not mean that a person would lose their dreams or joy in life if they went to a large company to work. She was talking about an actual example of people who work hard in order to integrate all choices into their range of ability.

“There are many universities, vocational schools, and companies in the world, these places all contain many kinds of different choices. I think that Sasaki-senpai can perhaps first try one of the places with the widest choices. This is a small suggestion from an old woman acting like a senior although I’m just three years older.”

“No..... please don’t say that.”

“Sigh, but if Sasaki-senpai is already assured of a permanent office, then you don’t have to be too worried about it, it’s still too early though.....”

“Permanent.....!”

A permanent office in this context meant marrying immediately after graduating from high school.

The smoke which came out of her ears changed to steam this time, and her face was completely red, as if something exploded within her body.

Chiho had never hated her strangely overactive imagination as much as now.

Seeing Chiho show such an easy to understand reaction, Maki smiled widely and leaned over.

“Oh my, don’t tell me Sasaki-senpai.....”

“Nononono! I didn’t think of anything at all!”

“The heart of this good looking young lady has already been stolen by some man on this Earth!”

“Awahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!”

“Maki, stop teasing Chiho-chan already!”

“Got it~”

Emi, who could not continue watching this, gave a reminder, and Maki earnestly backed off.

“Hah~~~~ hah~~~~ hah~~~~”

Chiho panted agitatedly, and quickly distanced herself from Maki in the small indoor space.

This lady was dangerous. Her way of getting close to others was faster and stronger than Rika.

“Sigh, jokes aside.”

“Which parts of that was a joke?!”

Faced with Chiho who was protesting seriously, Maki lowered her head with an expression which looked like she was not reflecting at all and apologized, “Sorry. But I have been very excited these two, three days, so I got careless and had too much fun.”

How could she have been teased just because of something like this.

“But, I was serious about the words I said just now. Just thinking about what can be done now which would not lead to wasted effort would be enough to grasp a certain direction to go.....”

Maki turned and looked behind her.

“This was what Yusa-san said to me a while ago. Starting from that day, my university life was much happier compared to before.”

“W-wait a moment, Maki? T, that was.....”

Emi turned red because the topic suddenly shifted to her.

“I still remember you know. Although people frequently say that I have a low tolerance for alcohol or am a sloppy drunk, I won’t forget things because of that. The words Yusa-san said to me that day are my treasure.”

“Stop talking about that————!”

Getting a strong blow from an unexpected direction, Emi almost fainted on the spot.

“D-didn’t I say so before? I have never achieved anything with my own power! So I hope that you wouldn’t remember what amazing things I said before, hurry up and erase that from your memory!”

“I don’t want to. From that day, I seriously wanted to change my own student life. Unexpected turning points in life will really always appear in unexpected places.”

“Don’t say such stupid things! Seriously.....!”

It seemed like Emi had a tendency of being run around in circles by Maki.

“Maki-nee-chan, Maki-nee-chan.”

“Hm? What is it, Alas=Ramus-chan!”

At this moment, Alas=Ramus went up next to Maki’s leg while dragging the Rilakkuma.

“It’s Papa.”

“Papa?”

“Yeah.”

“Hey, Alas=Ramus? What are you saying?”

“A-Alas=Ramus-chan?”

Because they felt a terrifying sense of danger from that innocent side profile, Emi and Chiho called out to Alas=Ramus together, but that bomb, ignoring the anxiousness from both of them, still dropped down from the sky.

“It’s Papa. Mama and Chi-nee-chan get along well with Papa.”

““Hey?””

“.....Alas=Ramus-chan.”

“Uu?”

“If you’re willing to tell me about that ‘Papa,’ I will give you that Rilakkuma.”

“Maki!”

“Shimizu-san!”

Even if Emi and Chiho went all out to stop Maki from bribing the young child, they were unable to cancel what had been said.

Alas=Ramus, who momentarily understood that she would get the Rilakkuma as long as she told Maki, showed a bright gaze, opened her small mouth and said, “Papa, is Maou.”

“Maou? That’s his name?”

“Shimizu-san, please stop! Actually bribing a child, don’t you feel ashamed?!”

“Maki, I’m really going to get angry okay!”

The three ladies started to argue vigorously without caring that they would disturb the neighbours, however Alas=Ramus’s individual performance had not ended.

Perhaps she sensed from Emi and Chiho's reaction that what Alas=Ramus said held some truth, Maki was not willing to back down.

“Maou..... name. Yeah, that's right, Papa, Maou.”

“Ah, Maou-san! What a strange name.”

Emi and Chiho, unable to force Alas=Ramus to keep her mouth shut, could only find ways to cover Maki's mouth.

“Papa, likes money. But he's very poor, and lives very simply.”

“A-Alas=Ramus-chan, please just stop here.....”

Of course, Chiho did not want Maki to continue hearing things about Maou, but after hearing Alas=Ramus judging that Maou was ‘poor,’ she could not help but feel shocked and shed tears.

Just as Chiho was considering if she should just harden her heart and shout ‘SHH~’ at Alas=Ramus—

“Then, is someone who is very afraid of being lonely.”

Alas=Ramus said these words.

“.....Alas=Ramus?”

Emi, using her arms to clamp down on Maki, could not help but show a surprised expression when she heard Alas=Ramus’s comments about Maou.

“Maou-san, is afraid of loneliness?”

“Papa values friends. So he doesn’t want them to go away.”

“Yu-Yu-Yusa-san, it, it hurts.....”

“Papa values money, values friends, values work. So Mama, Chi-nee-chan, and Suzu-nee-chan, all like Papa.”

“I-I don’t.....”

Although it was not known what excuses Emi wanted to give Alas=Ramus, for ‘her daughter’ to clearly say that she ‘likes Papa,’ caused Emi to be wavering greatly.

“Papa must have scolded Mama too, because he likes his friends.”

“Alas=Ramus, you mean.....”

Chiho let go of Maki, and faced Alas=Ramus.

Perhaps Alas=Ramus was saying something very important right now.

Emi, who also noticed this, let go of the groaning Maki and turned towards Alas=Ramus.

“Alas=Ramus, the ‘Mama’ you said just now..... does it refer to Lailah?”

Alas=Ramus nodded in a straightforward manner and answered Emi’s question.

“Although Papa values work and friends, ‘Mama’ decided on her own to make Papa work..... like this, isn’t it bad bad?”

Lailah decided on her own that Maou should work.

Emi and Chiho did not understand clearly what purpose Alas=Ramus had when she said this.

But for unknown reasons, both of them felt that it made sense.

Everyone present at that time had predicted that Lailah had brought some difficult problem related to the world situation of Ente Isla to Emi and the others.

But it ended up with Emi and Maou rejecting it.

They did not hear Lailah out.

Why did Maou not even want to listen?

The clue to the answer was hidden in the words Alas=Ramus just said.

“Decided on her own to make other people work huh.....”

Because she was taken away by Emi, Alas=Ramus did not stay until the end, Emi did not think that Alas=Ramus knew about what Lailah had planned as well.

However, although they felt Lailah's presence in a place closer than ever before, Maou and Emi chose to ignore it, so Alas=Ramus must have felt something was off about this.

Then she used her own way to try to find that answer.

“.....Alas=Ramus.”

“What is it, Mama?”

“That Rilakkuma belongs to Maki-nee-san. The one for Alas=Ramus, I will buy a new one for you later.”

“Really!”

Alas=Ramus showed a bright expression, as if the stern expression from just now as a lie.

“Really, we have to go home today, when we pass by Shinjuku on the way home, the stores should still be open.”

Emi looked up at the clock in the room, it would be 7pm a short while later.

“Eh? Yusa-san, you’re going back today?”

Although she had been grappled by Emi and Chiho with their full strength, recovering with a tenaciously fast speed, Maki widened her eyes like she had received a huge shock.

“Yeah, after all I suddenly came and stayed here for two days. I can’t trouble you any longer.”

“If it is Yusa-san, it doesn’t matter how many days.....”

Even if Maki looked extremely serious about it, it still could not be done.

“Thank you. But sorry. Someone else is staying at my home right now after all.”

“Is it that Maou-san puohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhry sorry.”

Maki spoke directly without thinking too much, Emi squeezed both of Maki’s cheeks with one hand while smiling.

“It’s a girl. She’s my friend from overseas. Didn’t I say so from the beginning.”

“Pwes pwes, puowy..... pwah, b-but, if something does go wrong, you can contact me anytime. As long as it’s something I can do, I’m willing to help you with anything.”

“Yeah, thank you, Maki.”

After letting Maki go, Emi regained her sincere smile, and hugged Maki.

“Wah!”

“Truly, thank you very much!”

“Ah, it-it’s nothing, you’re welcome.”

Although she stuttered a little, Maki still nodded clumsily a few times onto Emi’s shoulder.

Seeing this, Chiho seemed to understand why Emi came to Maki’s place.

“Come again! You must come again okay!”

After saying goodbye to Maki, who expressed her regret with all her might as if they would never meet again, Emi and Chiho got onto Fukutoshin line from Zoshigaya station together.

They were returning to Emi's home at Eifuku. The various trains heading towards Shinjuku-sanchome which stopped at the station were not as crowded as the peak hours.

Emi said to Chiho who was sitting next to her, "Sorry, Chiho-chan, we always end up involving you in the situation in the end."

"Honestly, for the first time just now, I had a thought that I don't want to be involved."

Chiho glanced at her figure reflected in the train window with an empty gaze.

"However, thanks to that, I roughly understood why Yusa-san would stay at Shimizu-san's house."

"It's a suggestion which Rika gave me. She wanted me to take this chance to go to a place unrelated to Ente Isla, angels, or the Hero to reorganize my feelings."

And that would be Maki, who admired Emi completely.

Maki looked like the type who would tease Emi until she ran around in circles, and when Emi had any troubles, she would cause a huge ruckus in order to cheer Emi up.

Because Maki did not seem to know about Emi's true identity, Emi was also unable to discuss things too deeply with Maki, but even so, Chiho did not think that the thing about visiting a university was just a simple excuse.

Emi was probably partially serious about finding Maki to discuss about the student life in Japan, and because Maki felt that seriousness, she sincerely responded to Emi.

The current Emi must have needed this kind of person.

With an action like combing hair, Emi was lightly stroking Alas=Ramus's head as she napped on Emi's lap.

“After ending work at MgRonalds, I met up with Maki to eat and went to the gym together. That child, even if she saw Alas=Ramus, she wasn't surprised at all and even accompanied me to buy Alas=Ramus's sleeping clothes. Thanks to her, I felt a comfort which I haven't felt in a long time..... although I have to properly compensate Em later.”

“She will definitely understand.”

“Even if she does understand, I still have to compensate her properly. Normally at this kind of time, Em’s requests will be related to food, once I think about it, my head starts to hurt.”

“Ahaha.”

After seeing Chiho laugh lightly, Emi also showed a smile.

“.....I also felt that I had gone too far earlier. During these few days, I clearly realized this.”

“Yusa-san?”

“Although this would depend on how one thinks about things, from a certain angle, this time I also used Maki who did not know anything in order to get relief right?”

“But that is what it means to be a friend right?” Chiho shook her head lightly. “Shimizu-san did not accept Yusa-san because she is expecting a reward, Yusa-san will also pay back Shimizu-san for what she did today in a completely different and unconscious manner, right?”

“That’s true, I don’t know how to say this as well. Although I did encounter a lot of misfortune because of Lailah, I cannot deny that if I am looking at this from Lailah’s point of view, she must have put in a lot of effort for my sake in her own way, at least that effort was not because she coincidentally needed me for her goal, but because I am her daughter..... sorry, I seem to have spoken in a confusing manner.”

“It’s alright, I know what you mean.”

Chiho nodded.

“I don’t think Nord-san would marry someone who sees Yusa-san as ‘The Hero of the Holy Sword Emilia.’ Of course, I am not completely supporting Lailah-san..... but I feel that Lailah-san must have done those things because she had never seen her daughter for a long time and did not know how to handle it.”

“Sigh, although I can accept slightly decreasing the distance between us, I do not plan to address that person as Mother.”

“That’s fine. You won’t be able to accept it immediately in the first place. Although she really might be Yusa-san’s mother, to Yusa-san, she’s just someone you don’t know who suddenly appeared, right? It would be impossible to understand each other during the first meeting just by blood relations alone. Even someone like me who has been with my parents for seventeen years will occasionally argue with them.”

“I’m actually surprised that Chiho-chan will argue with your parents.”

“I’m not truly such an obedient child to begin with.”

“If Chiho-chan is not a good child, then everyone in the world is a bad person.”

After smiling for a while, Emi started to think about a certain phrase Chiho said.

“Someone I don’t know..... huh?”

Emi remembered hearing this phrase from the mouth of a completely different person a long time ago.

That was before she knew about Alas=Ramus’s true identity.

“Who is that angel?”

“Someone you don’t know.”

That man commented about the angel who saved his life in an unconcerned manner.

At that time, Emi's level of recognition of Lailah was really 'her own mother who is somewhere in this world.' She did not personally know who Lailah was.

Even if she heard Emerada and Nord mention Lailah's existence, it did not cause a huge shake up in Emi's feelings like the time she knew that her father was still alive.

Even so, Emi still knew Lailah was her mother.

That man was also present at that time, so he also knew that Emi knew about this.

That was why he acted that way.

“Her own mother had saved the life of the man who is the enemy of humans” — why did Maou not tell Emi about this fact?

“.....”

“Uu.....”

The strength Emi used to hug Alas=Ramus became slightly stronger, and the latter squirmed her body in Emi's arms.

“Yusa-san?”

Not telling Emi about Lailah at that time, how did it benefit Maou?

No matter how she thought about it, there was none.

Even if he kept information about Lailah to himself, Maou would not gain any advantage, if Maou really wanted to be ahead of Emi, he would have used other methods such as hiding information about Alas=Ramus or the ‘Yesod.’

For Maou to hide information about Lailah from Emi at that point of time, there was only one reason.

“.....Stop joking around.”

That was to prevent Emi from getting hurt.

In order to prevent Emi from feeling troubled.

At that time, Sarel had just arrived in Japan, it was the time they started to feel distrust towards angels and Heaven.

If she knew that the one who saved the 'Demon King' was Lailah, Emi would definitely waver greatly.

During that period of time, Emi's restraint as the Hero and her determination to challenge the Demon King were her driving forces to live her life, once she knew this fact, she would definitely be unable to tolerate the contradictions between what her mother did and her duty as the Hero, and might be unable to take action for Alas=Ramus's sake.

"Although..... you're the Demon King....."

For Maou to see through her at that time also made Emi angry, but right now she had no confidence to say that she would be unaffected even if she heard about it at that time.

"Mama?"

Alas=Ramus, who was initially dozing off, sensed that the force hugging her had increased, and looked at Emi in a dazed manner, Emi buried her face in Alas=Ramus's small shoulders like she was avoiding that gaze.

She kept thinking of other reasons why Maou might have hidden information about Lailah at that time.

Maou must have hidden information about Lailah to create a disadvantage for Emi, if not he wanted to monopolise this information to get some benefits. It must be like this, or it would be too strange.

Because if it was not that.....

“Yusa-san, are you alright?”

“.....Yeah, I’m fine.”

Faced with Chiho’s worried voice, Emi did not raise her head and answer directly.

After a while, the train reached the stop before the interchange station, Higashi-Shinjuku station. The announcement within the train started to inform the commuters that the train would have to stop for three minutes to allow the Express train to pass by first.

“Yeah, I know. Fu!”

Emi exhaled with force and raised her head.

“Were-were you holding your breath?”

“Eh?”

After Chiho saw Emi raise her head, she asked this in a troubled manner.

“Yusa-san’s face.....”

“Hm?”

“Looks really red.”

“Eh?”

Emi used her hands to confirm her own face in a surprised manner.

Of course doing so would not confirm how her face was.

However, if someone would think so even under the white illumination of the train at night, her face should really be a little red.

Why was that?

She knew the reason.

With things as they are now, it would be useless to deny this.

“Chiho-chan, I.....”

“Hm?”

Emi did not require much courage and said this sentence naturally.

“.....Seem to not hate it that much.”

The bell of the train setting off sounded. The train started to move forward after the door closed.

“Eh? What.....”

Chiho tilted her head in confusion, unfortunately what happened next caused her to have no time to solve this doubt.

“This train is coming to an emergency stop! Please grab the things next to you! This train is coming to an emergency stop!”

A machine voice announcement suddenly sounded within the train, and the train which just moved off suddenly braked before the passengers had been able to prepare.

Both of them who were seated greatly lost their balance, Emi hugged Alas=Ramus tightly.

“W-what happened?”

“Kyahh!”

A sharp screeching sound was heard from the track and the train wheels, and the accelerating train quickly decreased in speed.

Even if it was not during the peak commute hours, it was still a metro connecting Ibekuburo and Shinjuki. Quite a large number of passengers were affected by the Law of Inertia, and there were people falling down everywhere.

“Chiho-chan, are you alright?”

“I-I’m fine. Alas=Ramus-chan is more important.....”

The train stopped completely after a short while, after Emi and Chiho confirmed that each other were alright—

“Scary!”

Alas=Ramus’s eyes snapped open, and continued to look around her without being too shaken.

The passengers who fell over did not seem to be badly injured, and started to regain their calm.

“Uh~that was the emergency brake. Just now.....eh?”

Just as the conductor was broadcasting in a rather flustered manner.

“Our train, uh, because someone at Shinjuku-sanchome pressed the emergency stop button, so we conducted an emergency stop. Uh.....”

Every time the broadcast paused, various noises of machines being operated were heard at the back, as well as the sounds of the wireless and establishing contact with some place.

“Our deepest apologies for delaying everyone during this busy time, our train will be stopping here for the moment.....”

“But the shaking was very bad just now, huh.”

“I hope nothing serious has occurred.”

Emi and Chiho looked at each other after calming down.

Other than the fact that the train was not moving, the situation of the other customers looked no different from how it was normally like when taking trains.

Some people were reading, some people were listening to music, some people were using mobile phones or slimphones, and there were also amazing people who were sleeping and ignoring this huge commotion.

Just as Chiho was looking left and right in a flustered manner within the train which had regained its calm—

“Uh~an announcement to everyone.”

A broadcast was heard within the train

“We have received a report that a commuter had fallen onto the tracks inside Shinjuku-sanchome station, so this train has stopped temporarily.

After confirming that it is safe, we will set off again, for causing trouble for everyone during this busy and tiring time, we are very sorry.”

“I feel that the train company can’t be blamed for such things happening.....
Chiho-chan?”

Emi subconsciously looked up at the ceiling and said this, but she noticed that Chiho was frowning for unknown reasons.

“What’s wrong?”

“Ah..... it’s nothing, I just thought of some strange things.”

Chiho said in a strangely soft manner.

“Strange things?”

“Yusa-san, do you know that the codes used in news have been trending on the internet recently?”

“What is that?”

Emi asked in confusion, Chiho said softly like she was recalling something,

“At the store in front of Hatagaya station, don’t we refer to the washroom as ‘Number 10?’ With that, even if the customers hear, they will not easily understand it, there is also the difference between ‘serious injuries’ and ‘critical condition’, as well as the true meaning behind ‘a strong impact throughout the whole body’ is actually..... things like that?”

“Ah~ I think I’ve heard of it before. For example, ‘someone has fallen onto the tracks’ actually means train pervert right? Eh, could it be because of this reason?”

But it was difficult to imagine that such an emergency stop will be carried out because of a train pervert.....

“No..... I also thought that way at the beginning. But during the broadcast just now, ‘someone has fallen onto the tracks’ was nonchalantly mentioned right?”

“Is that so? I didn’t hear it clearly.....”

“The Shinjuku-sanchome platform at Fukutoshin, is it possible to fall off there?”

“Eh?”

“I remember that Shinjuku-sanchome should have platform doors. However, the broadcast said that someone fell onto the tracks.”

“S-stop that, this kind of terrifying thought does not suit Chiho-chan. He must have said it by accident. Isn't it common to hear about someone's foot being trapped between the gate and the platform gaps?”

“T-that's true.”

Chiho, who was advised by Emi, also did not know why she suddenly had such dark thoughts.

However, she could not shake off this strange feeling at all.

The time shown on her mobile phone said that it was past 7 in the evening. That was the time large crowds would start to appear at Shinjuku-sanchome.

Amongst these people, someone did not barge in or simply enter the place, he had fallen onto the tracks.

Chiho also knew that she was being overly bothered by this.

She hoped that the train would move off soon, it looked like because she had spent too much time with Maou, Emi and the others, she had a tendency to become wary in strange ways.

Emi's troubles had decreased slightly after a lot of effort. Chiho hoped that no more additional accidents would happen and they can reach the station quickly.

But because she was underground, Chiho's small wish was unable to reach the heavens.

The lighting within the train suddenly extinguished.

“What?”

As the remaining light shining into the train came from the fluorescent lights within the tunnel, it was almost pitch black within the train, the people around them started to open their mobile phones in a panicked manner, and the lights of the standby screens started to flicker everywhere.

Among that, there were people who pressed the camera flash in their panic and illuminated everyone around them.

Even if she was troubled by Chiho's strange imagination, since something strange had happened, in order to ensure Chiho's safety, Emi used her left

arm to protect Chiho and surveyed her surroundings without letting her guard down.

As the passengers everywhere had turned on the LED lights on their mobile phones, they were strangely able to clearly see the situation within the train compartment, everyone was visibly shaken, and some women had already started to sob from fear.

“An, an announcement to everyone.”

Next, the announcement made by the conductor with a rather flustered voice was heard in the dark train.

There was a noise which seemed like it was from the wireless equipment in the background of the announcement which verified the abnormality of this situation.

“All the lights within this train have currently been extinguished. The emergency lighting will start up immediately. Everyone, please move calmly, before any instructions from the conductor, please do not..... eh?”

The voice of the mentally strong conductor who still made effort to carry out his duty despite being flustered cut off at a strange place.

“W, what is that.....someone is on the tracks.....”

“What’s going on?”

Perhaps he had forgotten to turn off the train broadcast, the conductor who was talking to himself and deviated from his duties caused Emi to frown.

“Someone, someone press the emergency communication button!”

One of the passengers who felt uneasy at the conductor’s strange words, said this like he was shouting.

Emi also became alert and started to look for the position of the emergency communication button, but because the button was located at a place where she would be unable to press it unless it left Chiho’s side, she hesitated for a while.

“This is an instruction from A1875T! T-there is someone on the tracks! That person is approaching this place from the direction of Shinjuku-sanchome..... ah!”

At this moment, the conductor seemed to have finally realized that the train broadcast system was still turned on and switched it off.

But doing this at this time would only increase the uneasiness amongst the commuters.

At this moment, everyone knew an abnormal situation had happened. Even so, even if they did not understand the contents, they hoped that someone could explain the situation.

Amongst the silence, affected by the unease, the fear rapidly expanded.

Emi gulped and expanded her alertness without letting down her guard.

Emi, with her right arm carrying Alas=Ramus, and her left arm around Chiho, got up slightly from her seat in order to be able to react to various situations at any time while sweeping her gaze over the passengers who started making a commotion because of their unease in order to avoid missing any strange signs, then a situation suddenly occurred.

“Mama!”

The warning came from Alas=Ramus who was in her arms.

The train made up of ten carriages started to move in an opposite direction than originally intended.

This way of movement was obviously abnormal and screams were heard within the train.

“Yusa-san!”

“Don’t move carelessly! Don’t leave my side! Ugh!”

An obvious impact occurred this time.

And it was not because of the simple action of the train backing up.

An impact like the ten train carriages had collided with each other shook the train body.

“What exactly happened..... again?”

Ever since the cut off from before, there were no signs of another broadcast.

The train shook three times.

“Yusa-san, can this be.....”

“T-that’s right, although I don’t really want to consider this possibility.....”

Emi nodded and confirmed this before Chiho finished speaking.

Although it was weak, it could be seen through the train windows that the fluorescent lamps in the tunnel were still emitting light normally, and in addition, no strange sounds were heard before and after the impact, so something serious like the tunnel collapsing had not occurred.

Furthermore, there was the voice who said “someone was on the tracks” before the broadcast cut off.

Currently, had this train been attacked by the ‘person’ on the tracks?

“Yusa-san, I.....”

At this moment, Chiho showed a gaze like she had made her decision, Emi interrupted her and shook her head.

“No, I cannot leave Chiho-chan here.”

With such an abnormal situation occurring, Emi really wanted to run out of the train to confirm the situation, but since she could not guarantee that it was definitely safe within the train, she could not leave Chiho behind and leave on her own.

Even so, taking Chiho out without clearly understanding the situation was also equally dangerous, even if it was this kind of moment, Emi was still strangely concerned about the warning within the train ‘Please do not carelessly leave the train, and listen to the conductor’s instructions.’

“B-but if this goes on..... ugh!”

Just as Emi was hesitating, the whole train shook heavily once again.

“It can’t be helped, Chiho-chan.”

“Y-yes.”

“When was the last time you drank Holy Vitamin β?”

“.....!”

Chiho’s eyes widened in surprise.

“I want to do something rather outrageous, but if Chiho-chan, who is easily affected, faints again, things would be bad, so I hope you can raise your holy magic as much as you can, can you do that?”

“No problem. I drank it recently.”

Chiho nodded her head lightly.

“The day I went to Urushihara-san’s hospital room, I used Idea Link, so it was on that day.....”

“I heard about that from Em afterwards. You seemed to have used it in an incredible manner. I will talk to you about it next time when we have the chance.”

Emi smiled lightly, then tensed up immediately and looked up towards the direction which the train was heading towards.

Chiho followed Emi’s instructions and slowly took a deep breath to suppress her quickly beating heart.

She felt that a warm power was currently expanding within her body.

The moment this power grew to a certain level, it felt that this power was included within another huge power.

Chiho, feeling surprised, through what she felt and her instinct, sensed that the power enveloping her own was Emi's holy magic.

“.....I guess nothing much will happen to the other people besides Chiho-chan.”

Emi mumbled in a rather uneasy manner, then gathered her focus on her forehead like she was abandoned her hesitation.

“Chiho-chan, Alas=Ramus, cover your ears.”

“Alright.”

“Oh!”

Chiho did not ask any questions, and followed the instructions together with Alas=Ramus.

At this moment—

“Wah!”

A heavy impact rushed through Chiho's entire body, causing her to shout in surprise.

It felt as if a huge wave went through the whole space which included herself in order to drown her.

“W-what was that just now?”

“I had enough! Hurry and let me out of here! When will the train move!”

Although the surrounding passengers felt something was strange, they did not experience an impact like Chiho did. Instead, this phenomenon was treated like it was part of the strange situation which occurred just now, causing the surroundings to become more chaotic.

Only Emi looked straight in the direction which the train was moving towards—

“Eh?”

and she frowned suddenly in surprise.

“A-a child?”

“Is, is something wrong?”

“A child is shaking the train.”

“Eh? W-why.....?”

“Although it wasn’t a far distance, I emitted a sonar.”

Emi replied quickly, and got up after letting go of Chiho.

“It looks safe within the train, but, that child is dangerous.”

Emi placed her hand on the window behind the seat without any hesitation.

“As long as we get rid of that person, the interior of the train should be safe, I’m going outside.”

“Ah, Yusa-san.....”

“Someone, someone jumped out of the window!”

In front of Chiho and everyone, Emi jumped out from the train window to the tunnel outside while carrying Alas=Ramus.

After that she immediately touched the train with her hand—

“It’s dangerous outside, don’t come out.”

And sealed all the doors and windows with a sealing spell.

Luckily, during the panic just now, the number of passengers were not so numerous to the point that a stampede accident would happen. Between Ikekuburo and Shinjuku, it appeared that more people will take the Yamanote line.

“.....Alright, you must have sensed my sonar right? Who are you?”

Emi glared towards the black shadow which was one train carriage away.

Although they did not notice it when they got on the train, Emi and Chiho got on the fifth carriage of the ten carriages. The silver front and back parts of the carriage were hidden in the darkness, and sounds of vibration were heard from them because they were affected by the impact.

“Because of you, up until the last train, the Fukutoshin might not be able to run at all. If this line cannot move, it can cause a huge impact on the various train networks. Although you look like you don’t have demonic magic, if you

do this during the time everyone is getting off work, you can't complain even if the Demon King is revived.”

Thinking back to the incident Suzuno triggered..... or more accurately, illegally caused, to cause Maou to regain his demonic form, Emi spoke up in provocation.

The both of them were currently in the underground train tunnel. Although the lights were working normally, the surroundings were still very dark.

Based in the response returned from the sonar, Emi already knew that the height of the silhouette was around that of a child.

The problem was that Emi could not think of any existences around here who would suddenly commit this violent act.

The demons of the Demon World should have retreated after the commotion at Azure Sky Canopy, Afashan in Ente Isla.

For the angels of Heaven, other than Sariel and Gabriel who had become used to life in Japan, the rest of them had cut off all contact with Earth.

Even so, with things as they were now, it was difficult to imagine that the human world of Ente Isla still had either someone powerful or an enemy faction to send an assassin over.

After the commotion at Azure Sky Canopy, Emerada, and Alberto would have definitely handled issues related to this, in addition it was difficult to imagine that Shiba and Amane would allow this kind of dangerous visitor from a foreign world to get away.

After both parties glared at each other for a few seconds, the first thing which caused a change in this situation was a wind which included the unique stinky smell of the underground rail, the wind blew from behind Emi's back to the direction which the train had been headed towards, which was also towards the direction of the shadow.

““!””

The shadow swiftly raised its head.

At the same moment, Alas=Ramus in Emi's arms leaned forward in surprise.

“Alas=Ramus?”

“.....Who is that?”

“Eh?”

“Very similar..... but, wrong. But, same. Who is that?”

“I”

Emi had not time to stop Alas=Ramus’s strange movements.

The shadow’s shocking speed, quickly shortened the distance between them.

“Ugh! Alas=Ramus!”

Practically on reflex, Emi changed Alas=Ramus into the holy sword, and prepared to block the attack from the mysterious shadow.

“W-what’s going on?”

Just as the shadow raised what looked like the arm to block the blade of the holy sword, Emi shouted in shock.

At first, she had thought that the ‘child’ attacking the train had such an unclear silhouette because he was wearing a dark coloured long robe or was wearing a cape.

But that was a huge mistake.

The opponent who clashed with Emi's holy sword with what looked like the 'arm', was actually a shadow.

As if it was carved away from the ground, only the red eyes of the black shadow which had a human appearance glowed in an eerie manner.

“Ugh!”

The strength of the black shadow was also very alarming.

Although it was not known what method was used by him to shake the train, just the impact from the sudden attack was enough to cause Emi, who was wielding the holy sword, to back up a few steps, therefore it could be seen that it was not a normal person.

“W-what is going on!”

Even if everything was already abnormal enough, the most abnormal thing was still the sound from the clash just now.

That was the sound of metal.

Although it was an unsteady shadow which could be described as the black flame, the instant it clashed with the holy sword, a sharp sound like the clashing of metal rang out within the tunnel.

From the shock transmitted to her hand from the hilt of the blade, it was the feeling of making contact with metal.

“Mama, that person is very strong!”

“I know that!”

Alas=Ramus, as the holy sword, seemed to have felt threatened from the power of the clash just now and gave a warning with a stern tone which was not heard before.

“Seriously, reality returned too early, what’s wrong with allowing me to immerse in those abnormal days for a while!”

Upon listening calmly, even if it was noticed that Emi’s words were opposite from the normal situation, there was no one here to rebuke her.

Although Emi did not want to admit that the holiday she spent with Maki was an abnormality and being attacked by a mysterious shadow in an underground tunnel was reality, Emi was not so optimistic to think that the shadow had coincidentally attacked the train she was on.

“But you did help me out after all.”

Emi concentrated on the hilt of the holy sword and showed a fearless smile.

“Since it’s dark inside and outside, as long as I do not carelessly produce light, I would be able to fully use my battle power.”

Although Emi would take the action of ‘transformation’ which would cause her hair and eyes to turn to the colour of the angels when she made up her mind to fight bravely against the strong enemy, as she could not produce light in this dark underground railway, she focused on strengthening the holy sword.

“Ohhhhhhhh!”

Because Alas=Ramus produced agitated sound as if she was spooked by something, Emi lost a bit of control, but she did not plan to put excessive burden on Alas=Ramus.

Of course, this was to prevent losing to the mysterious shadow during the fight, but if she just wanted to chase the enemy away, it would be simpler for her to transform directly without caring about the gazes around her.

Emi's goal was a completely different location.

“Alright, take this as a request, let us determine the winner before the maintenance staff arrive.....!”

This time, Emi attacked first.

Emi swung the holy sword towards the head of the shadow with simple huge movements, and the shadow also simply crossed its arms in defense.

A piercing metallic sound was heard and sparks flew, Emi's power was bounced back.

But all that was expected.

Emi, who completed her swing, turned her body around like she was somersaulting, and launched a horizontal slash at the fully exposed body, and of course, the shadow planned to guard against that attack.

“Ei!”

At this instant, Emi directly a powerful kick towards the shadow's face with her sole.

She aimed for the position of the eyes without hesitation, her opponent also acted to securely protect the face, but the instant the foot was blocked, Emi aimed for the body once again and pierced with all her might.

“!”

“.....Ugh!”

Although she increased her holy magic to the point where she was close to transforming, the tip of the holy sword did not even penetrate one millimeter, and the impact which rebounded from her right hand holding the holy sword caused Emi to frown, and the shadow also backed up a few steps because of the impact to its center.

“Hahhhhhhh!”

Emi did not overlook that opening and spun her body like a tornado to swing the holy sword towards the shadow.

Although these attacks responded with the feeling of being rebounded back by hard metal, perhaps it was afraid of Emi’s continuous attacks, the shadow placed its hands in front of it to protect its face and jumped backwards.

“Don’t think about escaping! I have to reveal your true identity!”

Emi's right foot stepped through the air which lacked circulation and a sound like cannon fire was heard within the tunnel.

Emi's body quickly closed in on the shadow like a cannonball.

“My strength, still exists for punishing those who disturb the world!”

Accompanied by a shout which did not sound like a Hero's at all, the tunnel was momentarily filled with the light of holy magic.

That was like a camera flash, a short transformation which would not be discovered as long as one looked away for an instant.

However, during that instant, the holy sword did touch the body of the enemy.

“?”

This time, no metallic sound was heard at all.

However, the blade did not penetrate the body of the shadow.

The blade of the holy sword passed through the shadow without meeting any resistance.

“Eh?”

Just like Emi, Alas=Ramus also felt something was strange with this situation that lacked any physical feeling.

Emi released the transformation on her body and did one flip in the air, and guarded against the shadow's pursuit.

However—

“I hit?”

The result Emi saw with her eyes and felt with her body was different, causing her to fall into confusion.

The left arm of the shadow changed into an appearance of a human arm.

As if freely transforming metallic clothing was worn in the first place, the black fragments which had disintegrated flew within the tunnel, and an obviously human arm was revealed.

However, on Emi's hand, the feeling of having broken her opponent's armour was not felt at all.

Although the shadow's arm could produce such a hard metallic sound, when it shattered, not just metal, even the feeling of making contact with clothes was not felt at all, what exactly was going on?

Even if an effective method of attack was found, she should logically continue the wave of attack, however the scene in front of her was too strange and caused Emi to hesitate.

On the other hand, as if the shadow did not expect for this to happen, it stared at its own left hand with its red eyes.

“It went in.”

“Eh?”

“It went in just now.”

At this moment, Alas=Ramus's voice which was heard within Emi's mind was clearer than before.

“Mama, the blade of the holy sword went in, a lot of power went through the body and cut something else.”

“Something else?”

“Mama, I know him. Don’t punish him anymore.”

“Eh? But.....”

“Although only his shadow was attacked, he is still stronger. But if you cut the thing inside, he will definitely die. Please.”

“Even, even if you say that!”

Alas=Ramus, who said this clearly as if she had grown up quickly, caused Emi to not understand at all.

And the contents were about asking Emi not to attack the opponent.

“T-then what should I do!”

But the opponent ignored the conversation on their end, or more accurately, he was not listening at all.

“Ugh!”

The shadow who had readjusted his posture continued to expose his human left arm and launched another attack towards Emi.

“Mama! Please! Stop it!”

“Even, even if you say that!”

Although Emi did not want to swing her sword in violation of Alas=Ramus’s will, the strength of the shadow’s attack was genuine.

That attack contained enough power that even Emi would be unable to avoid getting a serious injury if she was hit directly, and unless she wanted to summon Evil Repelling Armour which would produce obvious light, she could only defend with the holy sword.

“I-I can’t let this go on.....”

The situation did change, the part of the shadow which became a human arm would not be used to attack.

Although it was not known if the area not covered by the shadow was weak, or it simply cannot clash with the holy sword, since Alas=Ramus was resisting with all her might, Emi could not aim for that area when attacking.

The damage of the shadow did not affect the physical stamina at all, other than being unable to use his left hand, the shadow's attacks were swift and fierce, and just as Emi felt anxious about the development of the battle situation.

“?”

A strong beam of light approached from the direction which the train was coming from, which was also from the direction of Higashi-Shinjuku station.

Emi, who was worried that it was a train approaching from behind, noticed that the light beam was moving up and down vigorously, making it obvious that it was not the movement of a train.

“Yusa-chan!”

“Emilia~~!”

The voices within the tunnel belonged to Ooguro Amane and Emerada Etuva, both whom Emi did not expect to appear here, as well as—

“Emilia!”

“Ugh!”

Emi knew that if the people around her discovered that she was fighting, they might rush over, but after hearing the voice of the last person she wanted to hear, Emi gritted her teeth unhappily.

Even if tried her best to fight without emitting light to prevent the passengers within the train from noticing, without being concerned at all, Lailah still approached this place quickly while emitting a bright light.

“Unbelievable!”

Emi cursed in an agitated manner.

“What exactly are you planning to do! Do you want to waste all the effort I have put in so far?”

“This isn’t the time to say such things! Get away from that child quickly! You cannot allow the Yesod fragment to battle with that child! Hurry and get away from him!”

“Huh?”

Emi had no time to think about what kind of stupid things Lailah was saying.

“Mama!”

The moment Emi’s attention was focused on the approaching Lailah and Emerada and Amane behind her, the instant which a normal person would not notice even if they stared, the shadow’s left hand was already closing in on Emi’s body.

“Eh.....”

In this extremely short moment which was split into a few hundred parts, everything had already occurred.

Lailah rushed between Emi and the shadow.

The instant the shadow’s left hand which was extended towards Emi touched Lailah’s shoulder—

“Ahhhhhh!”

Lailah's scream echoed within the tunnel—

“.....!”

A warm liquid splashed onto Emi's face.

Before Emi could realise what that was—

“Oh no! What is that idiot doing!”

“Lailah! Emilia!”

When Amane confronted the shadow like she was protecting Emi and Lailah, Emerada rushed towards Lailah, who lost her balance, and Emi like she was going to crash into them.

Emerada used her slender arms to hug both of them and flew with accelerated speed to get both of them away from that shadow.

“E-Em..... just now.....”

“Think about that kind of thing later!”

“W-wait a moment, Chiho-chan still hasn’t.....”

“Just leave it to Amane-san to handle and everything will be fine! Right now, we have to get you and Alas=Ramus-chan away from that shadow!”

“Wait..... wait a moment, Chiho-chan..... Lailah, this is a joke right, what is going on.”

In a dazed manner, Emi watched the train, Amane, and the black shadow, which got further and further away, and pressed her hand on her face.

“Eh, is, is the neighbouring station that close?”

Even if Emerada was carrying Emi, her frantic voice after noticing the lights of Shinjuku Sanchome station did not reach Emi’s ears.

Emi looked to the side, and saw the side of Lailah’s face covered in blood, unconscious due to blood loss with her shoulder completely torn apart.

Of course, Emerada would not clearly know about the body structure of angels, but in the end, they had to move Lailah to a place where she could receive treatment as soon as possible.

If anything happened to Lailah, Emi's heart would fall into a dark abyss once again.

However, the key person Emi, had already completely lost her composure.

“What is..... what is going on here. Are you, are you controlling things in the shadows again? What is it, hey! How much must you interfere with my life until you're satisfied! How much trouble must you cause to the people around me until you've had enough!”

“Emilia!”

Emerada, who sensed that Emi was losing control, chided her in a stern tone, but Emi did not hear these words at all.

“Answer me!”

“Emilia! We can talk about this later! I'm going to fly under the platform to barely avoid the crowds! Please be quiet for a bit!”

“Hey! Answer me!”

“Emilia, please.....!”

Emi scolded the unconscious Lailah with a tone which was almost like a scream, just as Emerada judged that she could no longer fly while carrying Emi—

“It’s about time all of you stopped playing around.”

A low voice mysteriously cut through the warm air of the tunnel, and was clearly heard by Emi and Emerada.

“Puwahpu!”

At this instant, Emerada collided with a cotton like soft object and lost her balance in the air.

“Ah.....”

The unexpected impact, caused Emerada to let go of Emi and Lailah whom she was originally carrying, and was stunned after discovering that the both of them had flown forward based on the laws of motion.

However, regardless of Emerada herself, or Emi and Lailah, they did not collide with the tracks of Shinjuku Sanchome.

“.....Eh~~~.....?”

Emerada let out an airheaded sound.

The cloud like thing, which was like a mix of water and cotton, flexibly caught the trio. Emerada probably noticed the true identity of that thing and became stunned.

Maintaining the relaxed posture of being thrown onto a soft mattress, Emerada looked towards a certain person sitting on the platform.

“The few of you seem to be having a lot of fun tonight huh.”

“Ugh.....”

The owner of the voice moved both his legs around in a frustrated manner, and the leather shoes hit against the hard platform door many times.

“Do you know what time is it now, Emerada Etuva? It’s 7:30pm you know.”

“Y-yes~~.....”

“If I have to explain to you, who is not familiar with Japan, then 7:30pm is about the time most people are preparing to eat dinner. In other words, that would be almost the peak dinner time. Do you understand what I said so far?”

“Y- yeah~~.....”

He was angry. Emerada could sense it.

However, because she felt that the anger shown in his words had strange characteristics, Emerada could not judge how to handle it at all.

“When referring to peak dinner time, that means a lot of customers will come to the store. Many customers coming to the store means that the store will become very busy, you understand?”

“Y-yeah~~..... I understand.....”

“However, I am here right now. You know what it means, don’t you?”

“Uh~~..... that is~~..... erhm~~”

Although she could not determine it, it just felt like a bad situation. Emerada just knew that this situation seemed to have ruffled his feathers from an extremely bad angle.

“What’s wrong with all of you! Although all of you are normally lecturing me so arrogantly, you can’t even protect Chi-chan properly, am I wrong?”

Emerada flinched in fright.

Veins popping, looking completely angry, the man who landed in front of Emerada, who was in the air, was wearing a red uniform, a cap, cotton pants, and old leather shoes: the King of Demons, Demon King Satan, Maou Sadao.

“Is your holy magic and spells just decorations? Or is it because you have a power better than the people of Earth, so you won’t care about Earth’s troubles, and want to show a leisurely side? Huhh?”

“I have nothing~~ to say at all~~.....”

Within Shinjuku Sanchome station, which became completely silent, only Maou’s angry shout was heard.

It was impossible for Shinjuku Sanchome station after 7pm to be this quiet.

Behind the platform door, a large crowd of figures frozen like statues could be seen.

Maou must have opened a demonic magic barrier.

Emerada quietly and obediently accepted Maou's anger.

In the corner of his vision, he could see Emi, Lailah, and Emerada all floating within the quiet station.

“Seriously, not only is Chi-chan braver than all of you, she even did the mental preparations for crisis management. Even if Emi was at the side emitting a strong power and fighting, she still calmly notified me with Idea Link, this isn't an easy thing to do.”

“You're right~~.....we~~ rushed over because we sensed Emilia's abnormal power~~.....”

“That idiot (Lailah) did not even know what trouble Emi got herself into, and left Nord's side without letting Suzuno and Ashiya know first?”

“Ugh~~!”

Emerada became stunned once again, and her shoulders sagged.

What Maou said was completely right.

Emerada, who uneasily waited for contact from Chiho, quickly noticed that the sudden, large holy magic reaction was from Emi, and rushed out immediately.

Even if she met up with Amane and Lailah on the way, she did not think of Nord at that time.

Perhaps somewhere in her mind, she must still have some thought that if something happened to the apartment, Shiba will help handle it.

“Too naïve.”

Maou said this like he saw through Emerada’s thoughts.

“Chi-chan transmitted an Idea Link to Suzuno’s phone and my phone, so Suzuno, Ashiya, and Urushihara would probably protect Nord. Seriously.”

After Maou said this unhappily, he finally moved his line of sight away from Emerada, and glared at Emi and Lailah floating behind.

“Hey! Emi.”

“Answer me..... answer me.”

“Emi.”

“Lailah, you.....”

“.....”

Even if they were thrown into the air, and surrounded by a demonic magic barrier, Emi was still mumbling to complain to Lailah, and of course, Maou was not so kind to wait for her to calm down.

“Out of the way, idiot.”

“?”

It was only until she was moved aside by Maou with demonic magic did Emi finally notice Maou’s presence, and she looked towards Maou with wide tear filled eyes, but the latter ignored her and stood next to the conscious Lailah who had a torn shoulder.

“What had to be done to cause an archangel to become like this, seriously.”

Maou, who confirmed Lailah's injuries in surprise, ignored Emi and spoke to Emerada,

“Hey, is it possible to do the healing here?”

“N-no~~it probably cannot be treated immediately~~ we are still within the demonic magic barrier, and we have to first diagnose her condition.....”

“I understand. Then I'll do it.”

“Eh.....?”

Emerada stammered, Maou quickly interrupted her, and looked at Lailah again.

“Let me say this first, I rarely use healing magic on people other than demons, and it's the first one on an archangel. Don't freak out even if it's a bit crude.”

Lailah's bones were shattered, she was still bleeding, even an archangel would be in life threatening danger by staying in this condition. Or rather, after experiencing this power which caused an archangel who was so strong

that it would be idiotic to compare them to a normal human to end up in this state, it was lucky that she was still alive.

“This is really serious.”

When he started to emit the ominous light of demon magic, Maou frowned immediately.

“I had thought it was shattered, but it’s more serious than that. No matter what, it looks like it was slashed through by the hot blade. What kind of thing must be fought with to end up like this.”

Maou moved his gaze onto Emi, but Emi was just staring into space.

“Ugh..... uh.....”

Not knowing if it was because Maou emitted the demonic magic to encourage the wound to heal, or it was from pain, Lailah, who still had not regained consciousness, groaned.

“This might be a serious wound that can cause death from shock. The healing will also be accompanied by significant pain. It’s best that she remains unconscious.”

“Maou-san.....”

“Oh! Chi-chan, you’re alright. That’s great.”

At this moment, accompanied by Amane, Chiho walked out from the tunnel with an uneasy look on her face.

“I-I was, in the train the whole time..... c-compared to that, Yusa-san.....”

“She’s blanking out over there.”

While Maou was healing Lailah, he used his chin to point towards Emi, who was floating in terms of both her physical and mental state.

“Seriously, what happened?”

Rather than saying that Maou was asking Chiho, he was looking at Amane who had accompanied Chiho and spoke to himself.

“The opponent was tricky, and he ran away.”

Amane showed a wry smile, and even if she was not as seriously injured as Lailah, she was obviously hurt.

The tips of her long, black hair showed signs of being burned by high temperatures everywhere, underneath her long sleeved black shirt which was seriously damaged, her skin had changed colour due to bruising.

“Seriously.”

Maou was genuinely surprised.

Currently, it could be confirmed that Amane belonged in the same system as Alas=Ramus and Acies, she was a female with the power of the Sephirah.

She could easily suppress Camio, who was old but still a Demon Minister, nonchalantly dispel Maou’s demonic magic when he was in his Demon King form, could cause Gabriel to retreat without fighting, and the opponent was so strong that even Amane, who was at that level, could get injured.

Maou looked towards Lailah’s injuries, and closed his eyes to imagine what had happened.

“With this, I will return the favour from before! Stop coming to disturb my work from now on.”

Maou focused his demonic magic once again, allowing Lailah's shoulder injury to heal quickly.

“Is Lailah-san injured?”

“Yeah~~..... the Demon King is helping to heal her.”

Even when answering Chiho's questions, Emerada did not look away from Maou.

Until now, Emerada did not think Maou was a heartless demon. However, even so, the scene of a demon using demonic magic to heal a human was still unbelievable to Emerada.

The demonic magic of demons was harmful to humans, for a weak human, just making contact with demonic magic will cause things to go wrong in their bodies.

Perhaps because she had this prior impression, she could only think that all the miracles caused by demonic magic would only cause harm to anyone else who was not a demon.

Thinking until this point, Emerada realized that she felt surprised that demons had the concept of ‘healing.’

This made her understand herself better. Or more like humans had so little knowledge about their ‘enemies.’

Of course, just like what Maou said, the people and conditions which could be healed by demonic magic were severely limited. Since the fact that it would be harmful to humans would not change, then because Lailah was an angel, that should be why she was able to accept this kind of healing.

Emerada looked towards Chiho beside her who was looking towards Maou in a worried manner.

Currently, without any protection, Chiho was able to observe Maou using high level healing magic within a demonic magic barrier.

This showed that she had a certain tolerance towards demonic magic.

Within Urushihara’s hospital room, Nord had felt uncomfortable just by coming into contact with Maou’s demonic magic, but Chiho did not show any reaction at that time.

“Although she..... had become this strong.....”

Then how about herself. Just like what Maou said, although she had a strong power greatly exceeding that of humans on Earth, she was unable to properly protect one friend.

“So..... we are that weak.....”

“It’s not like that. It’s useless to blame yourself this much, don’t think too deeply about it.”

The one who extended a helping hand to the greatly regretful Emerada was Amane, who also like Chiho, was watching over Maou and Lailah.

“It’s just that the scale of the things you can do is too huge, so when you fail, the resulting troubles are also especially huge. Although it’s enough for Chiho-chan to stay here and not give anyone trouble, that’s not the same for you. Because you have strong powers, when you’re involved in trouble, you naturally have to use that power.”

“Amane-san.....”

“If you’re afraid of failure, then you can only give up on that power from the beginning, be unconcerned about everything, and continue living in solitude. However, all of you can’t do such a thing right? If so.....”

Amane glanced towards Chiho and Maou.

“You can only be like those children and make a choice. At crucial moments, are you going to act or not.”

“Am I going to act, or not?”

“I am essentially someone who dislikes troublesome things. So even if I have a strong power, I don’t plan to solve all the conflicts on Earth, and there is also no meaning in doing so. It’s just because I don’t want to feel the regret of ‘I should have acted that time’ that I force myself to act..... sigh.”

At that moment, a strange thing occurred.

“As for whether a good outcome would definitely happen after acting, that would be another matter.”

Maou stopped emitting demonic magic, it seemed like the healing process had ended.

Lailah showed no signs of awakening, but her breathing had become steady, and her shoulder wound was healed to the point that it would not be discovered unless someone examined her closely.

But compared to the healing of the wound, a more obvious change had happened to Lailah's body, and it was a huge change which could not be ignored.

“Ma-Maou-san, this is.....”

“Hm~~ Since that guy became like this afterwards, then this person is probably the same.”

Although Maou did not react that greatly to the change in front of him, Chiho felt it was a very dramatic change.

“Is this the Falling that Sariel-san mentioned?”

“Who knows, although I'm not sure what kind of phenomenon Falling is, this doesn't seem like something that serious.”

Maou shook his head.

“Help me, Chi-chan. Just now, if I did not help heal her immediately, the situation might have become very dangerous. You have to support me on this, I have a feeling that I will be scolded from various parties because of this.”

Maou and Chiho looked down at Lailah floating in the air with heavy expressions.

Lailah, whose hair was originally silver, had turned purple.

Chapter 3: Demon King, Explaining the Concept of Maintenance

魔王、メソテナスを語る



“W-what happened? What exactly is.....”

Nord appeared to be very agitated.

When Lailah, accompanied by Amane, and Emi, accompanied by Emerada returned to Villa Rosa Sasazuka via taxi, the both of them appeared to be very frail, as for Lailah, her hair colour even changed.

“Emilia, are you alright?”

“.....”

Emi’s gaze was so empty that even if Nord called out to her, she would not react tat all.

“What..... happened?”

Nord looked towards Amane, Emerada and Chiho. Chiho was lost on where to start, before that, Amane, who was supporting Lailah, answered from behind.

“It’s a long story, and cannot be explained outdoors.”

Amane did not answer immediately, and with a gaze, asked Nord to open the door of Room 101.

“I’ll take care of Yusa-chan, you can support her.”

“O-oh..... Lailah, what happened.....”

Nord did not seem that concerned about Lailah’s change in hair colour, and after glancing at Emi, he naturally took hold of Lailah’s body.

Seeing this, Emerada discovered that in this instance, Nord had coincidentally avoided a commotion.

Because Emi coincidentally got out of the taxi first, Nord naturally first voiced his concern for Emi. Emerada did not know how Emi would react had Nord shown concern for Lailah first.

After all, before Emi reached Villa Rosa, she continued to question Lailah with an empty gaze.

Why? Why do you have to make me live an unfortunate life? Why do you have the harm the people around me?

What right do you have?

“Emerada-san, where is the Demon King?”

Suzuno, who stayed at Villa Rosa Sasazuka in order to protect Nord, asked this. Emerada looked back at the streets of Sasazuka with a troubled expression on her face.

“About that~~..... he said that he was going back to the store directly~~.....”

“I see, he went back to work.”

“Y-yes~~”

Although Emerada felt surprised that Maou returned to work without trying to understand the situation after such a huge incident had occurred, it seemed to Suzuno that Maou’s actions were nothing to be surprised about.

After Suzuno noticed Emerada’s reaction, and said nonchalantly,

“Because he said that his store was pushing out the delivery service soon. Store Manager Kisaki is frequently not around, as the shift manager of that store, the Demon King would of course choose to return to work.”

“Is that so~~?”

“That’s right, you can ask Alsiel and Lucifer. Their reactions will definitely be the same as mine. Chiho-dono didn’t think it was strange either, right? And to send them back here, having Amane-san alone is reassuring enough.”

“T- that’s true~~”

Suzuno’s words were so accurate that it was as if she was at the scene at that time, stunning Emerada.

“You would be able to know this kind of thing as long as you interact frequently with your neighbours.”

“Oh.....”

“Anyway, Emerada-dono should rest for a while first, I will ask you what happened afterwards. Since I could feel Emilia’s power even from here, a fierce battle should have happened right?”

“I wasn’t present from the start either~~ so I’m not sure if that could be called a battle~~”

Emerada crossed her arms with a heavy expression on her face.

“And~~ the key person Emilia is~~.....”

“.....Yeah.”

Seeing Emi’s back as she was being brought into Room 101, Suzuno shook her head.

“It seems like, something very painful had happened.”

“In the taxi~~ she seemed to be mumbling all her complaints to Lailah~~”

“This is a really bad tendency.”

Suzuno did not know that Emi had not gone home for three days.

Even so, she still knew that Emi must have gone about her days by trying not to think about Lailah as much as possible, so Suzuno also wanted to respect her friend’s choice in her own way.

But it seemed like the result was not optimistic at all.

The instant the door to Room 101 opened, Emi suddenly raised her head, and backed up with such force like she was planning to knock Nord and Chiho, who were behind her, away.

“Emilia.”

“Yusa-san?”

“I’m not going in.”

“Eh?”

“I don’t want to be in the same room as that woman.”

“Yusa-chan, although this apartment has a Demon King, there aren’t any murderous monsters, you know.”

Amane cracked a joke in a troubled manner, Emi raised her frail eyes a little.

“I’ll wait upstairs.”

“Upstairs?”

“The Demon King’s room!”

Emi shouted hysterically, and pulling on Chiho’s arm, she started walking out.

“I don’t want to listen to Lailah! No matter what happens, it has nothing to do with me! I would normally be in the second floor room with Alas=Ramus, waiting for the Demon King and Chiho-chan to come back! So I’m going to do that today as well! All of you should just settle your own issues yourself!”

“Yu-Yusa-san, wah, wah, wah!”

Chiho, who was pulled by Emi with such force such that she almost fell over, was pulled up to the second floor just like this.

“Alsiel! Lucifer! Sorry for disturbing!”

“It’s fine if you want to stay here, but if you want to be thick skinned and stay here for dinner, then help me peel these string beans. Ah, Sasaki-san, you must be tired, please rest!”

“Since you know that you’re disturbing us, then act guiltier when you come in.”

After Emi opened the door to the common stairs with such a force like she was going to pull it off its hinges and ran up the stairs, the reactions of Ashiya and Urushihara, who both acted like they were already used to Emi barging in, were heard from within, then the door of room 201 was closed with such a loud volume that it made one suspect that the door panel might be broken.

“.....”

Nord was stunned at his daughter's actions.

“It seems like the dislike is really serious, how troubling.”

As for Amane, she shrugged her shoulders, as if she did not feel troubled at all.

“Emilia~~.....”

Emerada's shoulders slumped in a depressed manner like an abandoned puppy.

“Emerada-dono, my apologies, do you want to wait in my room? If Emerada-dono, who had witnessed everything, goes there as well, it might agitate Emilia too much.”

“.....Yes~~ you’re right~~”

As if to comfort the depressed Emerada, Suzuno patted her shoulder.

“This doesn’t mean that Emilia does not trust Emerada-dono.”

“I know~~ but~~ this can’t be helped~~after all, I can’t completely separate myself from Ente Isla~~ I will only provoke the part of her that is the ‘Hero~~’”

Although she looked a little sad, Emerada looked up at the common stairs of Villa Rosa Sasazuka without any tears in her eyes.

“Currently, she is~~ ‘Yusa Emi,’ right~~ the issues of ‘Yusa Emi~~’ should be solved by everyone in Japan~~ no matter what she chooses~~ I will support her~~”

“Japan is unexpectedly uncomfortable. Since it’s a rare opportunity, does Emerada-dono want to consider staying here for a little longer?”

“My occupation does not allow me to do so~~ no matter how convenient Japan is~~ and how delicious the food is~~ I am still more used to Saint Aire.”

“I see.”

Suzuno smiled and nodded at Emerada’s answer, and pushed the key to the cylindrical lock into her hands.

“I’m going out for a bit, please help to watch my home. If you feel thirsty, you can open my fridge.”

“.....Please come back quickly~~”

Emerada accepted the key and nodded.

“Even if I did get permission~~ I will still feel awkward opening the fridge in another person’s house~~”

“I understand.”

Suzuno hugged Emerada lightly, and gently patted her back a few times.

“Amane-dono, I’m sorry.”

“Alright alright. Being a bodyguard right, leave it to me. Hm~ Ashiya-kun and Urushihara-kun are upstairs, in addition to Emerada-chan, I don’t think anything serious will happen immediately no matter who comes.”

Amane agreed in a casual manner, Suzuno nodded, left Emerada and walked out of the apartment.

She glanced at her watch, it was almost 8pm.

“Occasionally eating junk food for dinner isn’t too bad either.”

After saying this softly, she stepped onto the streets of Sasazuka.

“Hm?”

The moment the automatic door at the McRonalds in front of Hatagaya station opened, Suzuno noticed two familiar faces in the corner of her vision and turned in that direction.

Following that, the other party seemed to have noticed her as well, and started to wave lightly.

“Rika-dono.”

“Hi.”

Suzuki Rika, sitting on the sofa, replied.

“And, Acies?”

Sitting opposite Rika, the one who showed a satisfied expression in front of a mountainous pile of wrappers, was Acies=Ara.

This young girl who looked like a middle school student was actually Alas=Ramus’s younger sister, but as the personification of another fragment of ‘Yesod,’ why would she appear at the MgRonalds in front of Hatagaya station together with Rika?

“Ah, Suzuno. My stomach’s really full now.”

“I think so as well. Acies, you ordered so much stuff, don’t tell me you asked Rika-dono to pay for everything.”

Other than the number of hamburger wrappers on the table that seemed to be a huge amount in the eyes of Suzuno, who normally did not eat fast food, there were also four empty paper cups.

Suzuno did not think that Acies had enough money to order so much, so she was worried that Acies wanted to make use of knowing Rika to have her pay.

“I heard.....”

Rika showed a wry smile mixed with the feeling that she had given up, and took out a piece of paper.

“That as long as I give the receipt to someone called Shiba-san, she would return the money to me.”

Suzuno face palmed and sighed, “If the Demon King wasn’t working, he would definitely punish you with his fist.”

“Ne~ Maou will only immediately use violence on me, so annoying.”

“I wasn’t referring to that. And planning to live on the money of others from the start is too pathetic. It’s not as if you’re Lucifer.”

“Being lectured at this kind of time, Urushihara-san is really pitiful.”

Rika, who already knew the situation of Maou and the others, also knew Urushihara’s real name.

“Sigh~ forget it, Suzuno-chan. Shiba-san is the landlady of your apartment right? Since I am already related to Emi and Maou-san, it’s not like I’m a completely unrelated person, when I have a chance to meet with her, I will ask her to pay.”

“.....I’m sorry, Rika-dono. I will remind Shiba-dono later.”

Although there was no need for Suzuno to apologise, Shiba’s attitude towards some things were strangely lax.

To put it in a nice way, she was not a stickler for details, but Suzuno also started to feel that with regards to money, it was a real thing.



“So why are the both of you at this store?”

“It’s probably for the same reason as Suzuno-chan.”

After saying this, Rika opened a news website on her phone and showed it to Suzuno.

In the format of a news flash, it reported that a mysterious incident had occurred on the Tokyo underground metro at the Fukutoshin Line.

“I have a junior at Docodemo who’s living near the Fukutoshin Line.”

Rika closed her phone with a complex expression on her face, and started to talk about Emi staying at Shimizu Maki’s house, which was near Zōshigaya station.

“Talking about Maki, she idolizes Emi a bit. Because the incident just happened to occur during the time Emi had went back, Maki kept mumbling that she was worried, so worried, so I came here thinking that everything must be alright and she must be thought too much about it. If it was trouble related to Ente Isla, Maou-san would probably take action first. If nothing happened at all, I will treat it like I came to eat a high calorie dinner..... but even though I tried to contact Emi on the way here, she did not reply to my calls or messages.”

From what Suzuno saw just now, although it was not as if she could not do so at all, Emi probably did not have the leisure to be concerned about messages.

Rika's voice became softer and softer.

“Then I coincidentally met Maou-san and Acies-chan at the door.”

“Although I didn't come here voluntarily.”

Acies puffed up her cheeks unhappily.

“Because Maou went so far away to Hatagaya, I was forced to turn into a merged state. Then Maou went to go to a place called an underground metro to lose his temper. So I can't act like it was a small matter even if I wanted to.”

Although Acies's words just now showed that there was a possibility that Acies's normally airheaded speech might contain some degree of calculation, this issue was not important right now.

“So, Acies did see what happened in Shinjuku after all?”

“It started on the way. Burp!”

After letting out a disgusting burp that did not sound like it should come from a girl of her age, the personification of the ‘Yesod’ fragment rubbed her belly and nodded.

“Amane and Chiho have gone back?”

“They just arrived there .”

“Emi and Em as well?”

Acies’s question made Rika lean forward and look up towards Suzuno.

“Yeah, although everyone had already returned to Villa Rosa Sasazuka.....”

But that situation could not be explained in a simple manner.

“Emilia rejected Lailah more strongly than she had done so far. To the point where she might have also rejected Emerada-dono at the same time.”

“Did she encounter something unfortunate again?”

Rika showed a pained expression.

“I’m not sure of the details yet. Emilia and Emerada-dono looked like they have received huge shocks, and are fatigued physically and mentally; Amane-dono also has to observe Lailah’s situation and guard against the surroundings, so I came to ask the Demon King for details if time allowed for it.....”

As she spoke, Suzuno surveyed the store.

“I don’t see him. Is he inside or upstairs?”

“After helping Acies-chan take her order just now, he was taken away by that pretty shop manager.”

“I hope he doesn’t get scolded by Shop Manager Kisaki because he went to save Emilia. Then, taking up space without ordering anything isn’t good. Sorry, but can I join your table?”

“Eh, does that mean I can order some more?”

“Acies-chan, you’re jumping around too much when you’re talking. Then again, didn’t you say that you were full just now?”

Rika said this in an exasperated manner, Suzuno placed her goldfish patterned handbag next to Rika, and walked towards the large employee counter with only her wallet.

“Welcome, what would you like to have?”

“Hm..... uh.”

Suzuno skimmed the menu placed on the counter and started ordering in a lost manner.

“I would like, this Full Moon Tsukimi Burger set meal, uh..... the fries and drinks, medium size would be fine.....”

(T/N: The Full Moon Tsukimi Burger was a McDonalds seasonal exclusive set meal in Japan to celebrate Tsukimi, the Moon Viewing Festival.)

“Please choose your drinks from here. And adding those items with the red label would cost an additional 100 yen.”

Perhaps he noticed that Suzuno was not used to ordering, the male employee pointed out the labels and drinks, and explained it slowly.

“Uh, then hot coffee.”

“Do you need milk and sugar?”

“I don’t need sugar, just milk will do.”

“I understand. Then please confirm the contents of your order.”

It was only when she finished ordering did Suzuno realise that she had been sweating slightly from her forehead.

Thinking about it carefully, this was the first time that she had ordered something from MgRonalds by herself.

Suzuno normally either came together with Emi, or it was Maou and Chiho behind the counter, so there was no need to be nervous about it.

Even if she knew Shop Manager Kisaki, once she had to order a meal from a stranger like this, Suzuno discovered that she was not used to MgRonalds at all.

The reason why she chose the Full Moon Tsukimi burger, was because it was at the top of the list of the promotional items, and it was written in kanji on the menu, so it was not as if she really wanted to eat that one.

“It seems like I need more training after all.....”

She was like this just being a customer. If she was an employee, she would probably be unable to handle these products at all.

Suzuno, who sighed at she handed a 1000 yen note over, noticed that the employee was looking straight at her face when she was receiving her change.

“Is something the matter?”

“Ah, no. You’re someone Maa-kun, no, Maou knows right.”

“That is correct. How did you know?”

For someone to suddenly identify her correctly, Suzuno was a little surprised.

Suzuno could not help but look at the face of the male employee in front of her, but she had no impression of that face.

“Ah, that, that’s because.....”

The largely built male employee scratched his head in a troubled manner.

“You normally come together with Maou, or Yusa-san who came to work here. In addition, well, for a young lady to wear a kimono when there aren’t any festivals going on, it honestly makes a person stand out a lot..... sorry, suddenly telling you about this.”

“No, it’s fine..... I see, so I should consider wearing western style clothing after all.....”

Although she had been forced to change into western style clothing during Emi’s birthday party, Suzuno still could not get rid of her fashion habits, and had stored the western style clothing.

She quickly looked at the nametag of the employee on reflex, and ‘Kawada’ was written on it in hiragana.

“Maou is at the back for the time being for work related matters. I think he would come out soon, I will ask him to go to your seat at that time. Thank you for waiting, this is your Full Moon Tsukimi burger and coffee set.”

“I see, sorry for the trouble.”

Suzuno, who recovered from her surprise, said her thanks and accepted the tray.

“Uhm.....”

Even so, still feeling strangely bothered, Suzuno still looked towards her feet repeatedly and walked towards the seat where Rika and Acies were waiting.

“Is something wrong?”

“It’s nothing, I just feel that a kimono is really too attention grabbing after all.”

“Of course. But since Suzuno-chan always dresses like this, we’re already used to it.”

Rika showed a wry smile.

“I-I see, hm. If it’s winter clothing, there should be designs which are thicker and longer, I should think about western style clothing a little more seriously.....”

Suzuno, who almost buried herself into the issue of clothing, came to her senses in the nick of time.

“My clothes don’t matter. The important point is Emilia. Acies, what happened..... hey!”

Suzuno, who planned to ask about the incident at the Shinjuku underground metro, showed a blank expression when she looked towards Acies.

“Ah~ when I turned around after seeing Suzuno-chan order, she had already become like this.”

“.....Hmuhhhhohoho.”

Acies, who filled her own stomach with other people’s money, leaned back against the single person chair in an uncouth manner and was snoring, she had decided to take a nap after eating.

“How..... how can she lack any tension!”

Although she was merged together with Maou, even if a huge incident occurred which caused Emi and Emerada to become so fatigued and Amane to get injured, having seen the scene, Acies was still acting like this.

Even if Acies was originally the kind of person who would not think too deeply about things, this was really too much.

“Acies! Wake up! It’s forbidden to sleep within MgRonalds!”

“Uhmew.....”

Even when she was grabbed by the shoulders and shaken by Suzuno, Acies still did not open her eyes.

“Hmuh..... ahm..... uuuu..... I can, still eat.....”

“I wasn’t asking you about this!”

“When I see this, it feels like nothing that serious occurred. It makes me feel stupid for worrying so much.”

“Don’t be fooled, Rika-dono! This is because of Acies’s personality, in reality, the situation should be very serious! Hey, Acies!”

“Uupuh..... hmuuhhu.....”

“Although Alas=Ramus is so attached to her parents, why are the both of them so different!”

“Difference in environment, or an issue in upbringing I guess? Or could it be that the angel-like Alas=Ramus-chan will become like this when she grows up?”

“Such a thing cannot be allowed! Hey, Acies!”

Although she could not shout loudly because she was aware of the gazes around her, Suzuno still used all her might to pull Acies back from the boundary of sleep.

At this moment, Maou returned from the Employee Room.

“Ah~ that was scary. I thought I was going to get scolded.”

After healing Lailah and handing her back to Amane and the others, Maou immediately returned to the store.

Waiting for him was Rika at the door and Kisaki inside.

Maou had thought that Kisaki would stay in the office today and not come to the store, so he flinched in fright when he met her eyes.

Luckily, Kisaki did not mention anything about Maou leaving the store, and only confirmed the workflow for work tomorrow.

“You owe me one okay. Actually saying that you’re going to leave the store for 30 minutes at such a busy time. I thought something had happened.”

Kawada intentionally showed an unhappy expression.

“Sorry, Kawa-cchi. I will definitely pay you back properly. How did you explain it to Kisaki-san?”

“Didn’t Maa-kun say that you’ll come back in 30 minutes? Kisaki-san came 5 minutes before you returned, I believed that you would really come back in 30 minutes, so I said that you went to return something a customer had forgotten. That was terrifying. You should tell me the reason next time okay.”

“I’m saved. Sorry.”

Maou put his palms together and bowed deeply in thanks to Kawada.

“Then, what did the both of you talk about? Especially considering the work for tomorrow, it might be something important right.”

“Hm, the delivery Mopeds will finally be delivered tomorrow. However, Kisaki-san might not be in the store at that time, so she wanted to let me know just in case.”

“Oh, I see. It’s finally starting, I’m so nervous.”

The second floor MdCafe had only been open for around two months, and the new MgRonalds delivery service was going to be pushed out.

During the period when the pushing out of the new service was decided, Maou completed the complex journey which caused huge changes to the situation around him. It felt like a short time, yet it also felt like that a lot of time was spent.

Amongst this, the things worth mentioning would be meeting up with the personification of the 'Yesod' fragment and Emilia's father Nord. In addition, it would be the journey to Ente Isla. And lastly would be Emi getting hired to work at MgRonalds and Lailah's appearance.

For so many things to occur around him as the Demon King, Maou could not help but suspect if he had completed something huge enough to bring about a revolution in the world, though this did not mean that he himself had changed.

Even if he obtained a mysterious power close to that of a Sephirah by merging with Acies, and even regained his demonic magic, Maou did not plan to change his current goals or methods. Even if Emi would end up appearing around him more often, since the other party did not have any liking towards him, it would be fine as long as he handled it appropriately.

Currently, the situation in the Demon World and Ente Isla was stable, Heaven had also cut off all contact with Earth, so logically, an incident which would cause Maou to take action in order to handle it should not happen anymore.

However, since something like this occurred today, this meant that there was either some hidden trouble around him, or he had overlooked some risks earlier.

But even if he really did miss something out, Emi was the one who ended up in trouble, so it might not have anything to do with Maou at all.

Therefore, Maou was not thinking about proactively finding the risk which he had overlooked.

Even if he did it, it was just a waste of time and did not benefit Maou at all.

To Maou, the most important thing right now was to welcome the new business promotion that was beginning soon with his trusted comrades.

“Ah, oh yes, Maa-kun.”

“Hm..... what kind of look is that?”

Kawada, who initiated the conversation, had a gaze which strangely contained some anger, causing Maou to cower a bit.

“Your friend came.”

“Friend?”

“The kimono beauty who always comes with Yusa-san and Chi-chan as a customer. At table 31.”

Maou glanced towards table 31, other than Rika, who sat at the sofa seat, and the back of Suzuno’s head, as she sat opposite Rika; he even saw Acies who was sitting there in an unnatural position.

“Oh, it’s Suzuno. What is it. Did she come to get details about the situation like Suzuki Rika?”

Emi and the others should have reached Villa Rosa Sasazuka already. That was why Suzuno came to ask Maou about the situation.

“Who are these people? What’s up with you Maa-kun, although you already have Chi-chan, what’s with this. There’s a child who looks like a foreigner and a lady who looks like a salary woman, what relationship do all of you have!”

“Uh, even if you ask this like that, there really is nothing between us. Suzuno is just a normal neighbor, Acies is more like a relative, and as for that lady, to be more precise, she is more like Emi’s and Chi-chan’s friend. Then again, please don’t drag Chi-chan into this. Didn’t I already say that there is nothing between us?”

“There you go again. There should be a limit to your jokes, seriously. A man living in a rundown apartment by himself with a kimono beauty living next door, that’s an urban legend.”

“Kawa-cchi, you shouldn’t describe other people’s homes as a rundown apartment. And I’m not living by myself at all, didn’t I mention before that I’m living with two male friends?”

“Recently, I’m starting to suspect that your roommates aren’t male.”

“Just let me off already.”

It was not known how serious Kawada was with regards to what he just mentioned, but he suddenly showed a serious expression and looked towards Suzuno at table 31.

“That person seems to be troubled about something. And in a rare move, she came to find Maa-kun alone, did something bad happen to Chi-chan or Yusa-san?”

“.....”

This time, Maou really had the misconception that maybe Kawada knew about everything in Ente Isla after all.

Although the reason for Suzuno’s visit did have to do with Emi and Chiho encountering an incident, unless it was like Rika who knew about the movements of Emi and the others beforehand, it should be difficult to predict this.

Maou was summoned by Kisasi for less than 10 minutes. In this short amount of time, Kawada had observed Suzuno who he mostly did not know well, and made a correct deduction.

“You should reconsider your career path after all. Your parents who are running the restaurant are still healthy right? If you don’t wish to be a counsellor, you should be a teacher, Kawa-cchi would definitely be good in a job where you need to face people every day.”

“Running a restaurant is also a job which interacts with people too.”

Just as Kawada ended the topic and Maou also prepared to head towards the café counter on the second floor.....

“Really..... if you want to wait, then wait at home.”

Sensing the stare from table 31, Maou had planned to ignore it and go upstairs directly—

“Sigh, seriously.”

But in the end, he turned and walked towards table 31.

“.....Customer-san, please don’t sleep in the store.”

Maou called out to Acies in a formal manner as she rested her head against the chair and slept.

“Uhh..... I..... am hungry.”

Acies, whose stomach was obviously bloated, seemed to be having a very exaggerated dream.

“Hey, Suzuki Rika, did she really eat 40 hamburgers by herself?”

“She stopped when there were five left, and said she wanted to take them home.”

“Since she could already eat so much, why did she stop at such a strange number.”

Maou’s shoulders slumped in a depressed manner.

“I’m going to be busy until closing time, and I can’t leave early either. All of you should go back after finishing the meal, else you won’t be able to catch the last train.”

“Rika-dono, although my room is small, I have a whole set of cosmetics, please come and stay over if that happens.”

“Talk to me already.” Maou, feeling frustrated, said this angrily.

“Nothing special happened. The underground metro that Emi and Chi-chan were on was attacked by a strange person, after Amane and Lailah went to help, Lailah was injured, then I helped her heal her wound. That’s all.”

“From the viewpoint of most people, being able to describe these things as ‘Nothing special happened,’ Maou-san is stranger.”

Rika read the news website on her phone and frowned.

According to the report, the cause of the chain of incidents which included the emergency brake at Fukutoshin line was currently unknown.

Even if there were no casualties or injuries, three out of ten carriages had derailed, and there were signs of the doors of two carriages being forced open.

The connection between what the conductor in his communications ‘There is someone on the tracks,’ and the activation of the emergency brakes at Shinjuku Sanchome station was not made clear. Currently, only a few hours had passed since the incident occurred, so the train services had not recovered.

Just from the results, all the trains leading to the suburbs via the Fukutoshin line had descended into chaos.

“When I received Chi-chan’s Idea Link and rushed over, Lailah had already been injured, because the situation looked very serious, I used a barrier to seal the area around Shinjuku Sanchome station. Although Lailah’s hair turned colour after accepting demonic magic treatment, it’s still better than dying right? I can only say these things. So after all of you finished eating and rested for awhile, you should go back.”

Although Suzuno and Rika recognized his professionalism from how he did not ask them to go back immediately, the both of them obviously were unable to accept this explanation.

“Who is that ‘strange person?’ Didn’t Amane-dono have a hard time fighting as well?”

“Amane-san is the dark skinned lady who saved me before right? She’s not a normal person after all huh.”

“I don’t know about that. Emi was in a completely confused state, so I couldn’t ask her anything at all. In addition, Emerada only got a small glimpse, and I had no time to listen to their explanation. Seriously, rather than asking me, you should ask Chi-chan or Amane-san instead to get a clearer picture.”

“Emi..... did something happen to her?”

“Since you’re asking this, it means that you heard about the rough situation from Emi right? It’s a family dispute. Not considering the father, she seems to be unable to get along with her mother at all. This isn’t an issue which we outsiders can interfere with. Then, I’m going back to work. You can show yourselves out. And help me wake Acies up too.”

“Ah, wait a moment.....”

Ignoring Rika calling out for him, after Maou said this quickly, he turned around and went up to the second floor without looking back at all.

“Why is his attitude so cold?” Rika pouted unhappily.

“.....”

Suzuno did not push herself to chase after Maou and started to obediently eat her fries.

“What do we do, Suzuno-chan. Do you want to wait until he gets off work? Seeing how he’s acting, he must be hiding something.”

“Rika-dono can tell as well?”

“Hm? Y-yeah?”

Seeing Suzuno eat her fries one by one, and show a smile for unknown reasons, Rika replied in a troubled manner.

“The Demon King missed out a key portion. However, that incident and the incident this time are not directly related, and he will only become more stubborn if we interrogate him about it, so I did not point it out.”

“Hm? What do you mean?”

“Hohoho.”

Suzuno drank one mouthful of coffee and turned her head slightly to look towards the second floor.

“At that time, the Demon King left the store at that time right.”

“Eh?”

“Just now, I heard the Demon King talk with the employee at the counter.”

“Y-you can hear it? A conversation that far away?”

Rika could not help but look in the direction of the counter.

Even if they were amongst the seats on the first floor, the seats of the Rika and the others were still rather far away from the counter.

Even if the store was only 60% filled, no matter how much Rika tried to concentrate and listen, she could not hear what the large sized employee was saying at all.

“Yeah, this is considered an occupational habit.”

Suzuno ignored the surprised Rika and continued to explain.

“After the Demon King seemed to have said ‘I will come back in 30 minutes’ and left the store. Although he really did return in 30 minutes in reality, factoring in the facts just now, if he acted after receiving Chiho-dono’s request for help, then the timing would be too rushed. And.....”

“And?”

“I would like to ask, Rika-dono’s job, do they allow you to use your phone for private conversations during work?”

“Eh? Are you asking if I can use my phone during work? Of course not. It is working hours after all.”

“That’s right. You can’t use your phone when you’re working. Then when did the Demon King receive Chiho-dono’s Idea Link?”

“The Idea Link you’re talking about, is referring to the telepathy like magic in your world right?”

“That’s right. Chiho-dono learned Idea Link during a short secret lecture.”

“Is it supposed to be a tuition class?!” Rika rebutted simply, but Suzuno ignored her.

“Chiho-dono is not a sorceress. She can only replenish the energy she needs via forceful methods and use that power, and she is unable to use it bare handed like us. Chiho-dono uses her mobile phone as an assistive tool for magic.”

Suzuno started to explain the concept of Chiho using her mobile phone as a spell amplifier for Idea Link.

“If I listened to this directly without thinking about it, I would only feel that Chiho-chan is emitting some kind of dangerous wave.”

Even if Chiho told her that she had learned Idea Link after actually listening to someone from a foreign world explain the concept in detail, Chiho’s surpassing of common sense was made only more obvious.

“Anyway, unless his mobile phone is with him, he would definitely be unable to receive the Idea Link from Chiho-dono. During the dinner period when the incident happened, the Demon King should be busy with work. However, the Demon King said that he rushed to the scene only after receiving Chiho-dono’s Idea Link. What is going on here?”

“Hm? Hmmm?”

Rika, unable to understand what Suzuno was trying to express, tried to think hard about it.

“Could it be..... it shouldn’t be during the break right? Dinner time should be considered a busy time. Not just Maou-san, it feels as if all the employees would not secretly hide their mobile phone in their pocket..... hm? Sorry, I give up, how would it work?”

“It’s simple. Before the Demon King received the request for help from Chiho-dono, he had already left the store..... this Full Moon Tsukimi burger is harder to eat than I thought.”

“Eh?”

Suzuno unwrapped the burger and got a small shock at seeing the rather thick burger inside.

“Hm..... Uhm... Actually being able to eat 35 of them, what is going up with her body.”

Suzuno ate the thick burger with small bites and looked towards Acies with a confused gaze.

“The holy magic Emilia has is different from normal humans. In actuality, as long as she adds on Alas=Ramus’s power, other than exceptions like Shiba-dono and Amane-dono, it’s not too farfetched to say that Emilia is the strongest human in the universe.”

“Strongest in the universe, huh.”

Rika showed a wry smile because of this description which lacked any feeling of reality.

“Although I don’t know who was the one who attacked, Emilia used her holy sword to battle with the enemy. After Chiho-dono heard the sound of Emilia fighting, she judged that she was unable to handle the situation and used Idea Link. The Demon King also received it immediately..... in other words, after the Demon King sensed Emilia’s holy magic, he immediately ran out from the store. That was why he was able to immediately receive Chiho-dono’s Idea Link.”

“.....Hm, but is there anything wrong with that? I don't feel that there is anything out of place from this.”

Maou sensed the signs of Emi fighting, and left the store in order to handle this emergency situation.

What was so strange about this?

“Rika-dono probably wouldn't think it was strange, right? However, from our point of view, this is a huge problem..... hm, this is too much for me, I need vegetables, or at least green tea to go with this.”

To Suzuno, who normally had the habit of eating healthily for all three meals, having just a hamburger and fries for dinner was really too imbalanced.

After spending a few minutes to finish her dinner with a frown, Suzuno mentioned one fact.

“Maou Sadao is the Demon King, Emilia is the Hero. The both of them have an antagonistic relationship. Even so, once the Demon King sensed Emilia's holy magic, he ran out of the store before receiving Chiho-dono's request for help. Don't you feel that this is a huge problem?”

“Do you mean that he ran out of the store because he felt that Emi was in some kind of danger?”

Suzuno nodded curtly.

“At least to the Demon King in the past, this was an unimaginable action.”

At least, if it was the Maou during the time Suzuno just moved to Sasazuka, even if Chiho and Suzuno tried to persuade him, he would just unhappily mumble ‘I don’t care what trouble Emi is in, I’m very busy at work. Since she’s the Hero, then ask her to think of a solution,’ or something similar.

Although he would not act that way if Chiho was also in danger, this time, Maou only knew that Chiho was present as well after leaving the store.

“Recently, this tendency is getting more and more obvious.”

After Suzuno finished the burger, she carefully folded the paper and continued to speak.

“The Demon King would always complain about Emilia, but still treated Emilia as an important comrade. In the past, in a moment of being affected by the atmosphere, he had named Emilia as a ‘Demon General,’ it seems like that this is close to becoming a fact in the Demon King’s heart.”

“Hm, hmm? Hmmm?”

Rika worked hard to digest Suzuno's roundabout explanation in her mind—

“Eh, this means.....”

And arrived at an outrageous conclusion in the end.

“This means, eh, it can't be, ehh?”

“Considering the relationship between the Demon King and the Hero, this is shocking right?”

Suzuno, who thought that the reason for Rika's surprise was the same as hers, had thought that she was smoothly finished her explanation.

“Oh my, of course I'll be surprised. In other words, it is that right?”

“Yeah.”

“To Maou-san, Emi has also become a girl to be protected, right?”

“.....Hm?”

However, not only did Rika's unexpected words caused Suzuno's smile to freeze, she even raised her eyebrows in a strange manner.

“No, eh, wait, in other words, kya~ oh dear, it's that right, it's that after all isn't it? A forbidden love crossing the boundaries of being enemies? Kya~ oh dear! Isn't that too hot blooded?”

“L.....love?”

“I'm right, am I? Although they're enemies, after being with each other over a long period of time, they developed feelings other than hatred, and in the end Maou-san started to become self-aware about this right?”

“Hmmm? Wait, wait, Rika-dono? This seems a bit wrong! Rather, it really is wrong!”

Suzuno could not help but say it twice.

“What's wrong with that. Their bonds are already so deep that Maou would worry about Emi who was originally his enemy on reflex right?”

“P.....perhaps..... saying that, isn't considered wrong, although it can't be considered wrong!”

“It’s nothing, relax. I’m not seriously thinking that Maou-san had developed opposite gender interest towards Emi you know?”

“Then why are you smiling in such a strange manner!”

“Because~”

As if the stern expression from just now was fake, Rika showed a radiant smile.

“For human relationships, it’s easier to understand if it was expressed in a simpler manner, and everyone would be more relaxed like this too!”

“Huh?”

“As for Emi’s and Maou-san’s situation, between the positions of the human Hero and the King of Demons, there are always factors of being enemies, revenge for killing one’s father and one’s obstacle in conquest and so on right?”

“T-that should be correct.”

“Under normal situations, all these are obstacles which are difficult to overcome right? But that means that for Maou-san, he had already overcome

these things right? Because he immediately ran out of the store after thinking that Emi might be in danger correct?”

Rika was correct, although the direction she wanted to discuss was slightly different from Suzuno. However, for unknown reasons, when Suzuno tried to acknowledge this, her mental state would go into a commotion, so she shook her head vigorously.

“No, but, it just looks like this from the Demon King’s point of view, for Emilia’s side, she had not come to terms with the Demon King.....”

“Suzuno-chan? What are you feeling nervous about?”

“In, in what way..... am I nervous.”

“Uh, but your face is really red.”

“Huh?”

Suzuno touched her face frantically, but of course, she was unable to know the colour of her own face in this way.

“N-no, this is.....”

“Ah, that makes sense, Suzuno-chan is different from Chiho-chan, you’re someone on the side of the Ente Isla humans. So you’re unable to honestly feel happy about the Demon King and Hero shrinking the distance between them.”

“T-that’s right. That would.....”

Be correct?

Although Suzuno was close to using Rika’s explanation, a calm portion of her mind gave her warning at the moment she was about to use it, expressing that she was not thinking this way.

Because she only used it afterwards, that meant Suzuno was not thinking about such a thing at all in the beginning.

However, Rika did not notice Suzuno’s complex feelings, and smiled in satisfaction, “I see, Maou-san is proactively getting closer to Emi.”

“Uh, y-yeah, it might be like that, but.....”

“This should be something very amazing, right?”

“.....Hm?”

Rika supported her chin with both her hands.

“Although I am not planning to pair Emi and Maou-san together.”

“Y-yeah.....”

“But seeing friends fighting from the sidelines isn’t a happy thing to experience right. I currently kind of understand Chiho-chan’s feelings now. The feeling of hoping that there will be no need for humans and demons to kill each other.”

“Rika-dono.....”

“Heh heh.”

Rika laughed in a troubled manner.

“In addition, I also.....”

“Hm?”

“.....It’s nothing. I really can understand Chiho-chan’s feelings right now. And I painfully understand it. I also know why Chiho-chan can act in such a determined manner. Although I am also surprised at myself for no longer caring that these people are demons. It’s just that..... compared to Chiho-chan, I don’t seem to have any hope in that area~”

After Rika said this, she pushed the tray to the side and slumped on the table.

“It feels like no matter how much time passes, he still won’t buy a mobile phone.”

“Mobile phone?”

Although Suzuno was troubled by this sudden change in topic—

“It’s nothing.” Rika replied with a rather stiff voice.

“Then, I’m going back first. Since I heard something good, and understood the situation, since Emi had not calmed down yet, then it’s best I do not interfere first, just knowing this is a result..... eh?”

As if she had come to terms with something by herself, Rika looked up and after seeing the seat opposite her, she blinked once.

“Where did Acies-chan go?”

“Hm?”

Suzuno looked beside her in shock, and Acies who had been in deep sleep and dreaming a greedy dream so far, had suddenly disappeared without any of them noticing.

“It’s still warm. She shouldn’t have gone too far.”

Suzuno touched the seat Acies was sitting on, and the residues of human temperature could still be felt.

“Did she go to the washroom?”

“.....No, I have a bad feeling..... ah!”

At this moment, Suzuno turned around on reflex because she heard the heavy sounds of someone descending the stairs of MgRonalds.

Then with terrifying anger hidden behind a stiff smile, Maou Sadao was actually heading in their direction.

Maou, who reached the first floor, went straight towards Suzuno and Rika, and with a voice which seemed to come from the cauldrons of Hell befitting the name of Demon King Satan, he said with a smile.

“What the heck did you tell Acies.”

““.....Eh?””

“About me? And Emi? What about it?”

“Well.”

“Uh~~”

Rika groaned exaggeratedly. As for Suzuno, she pressed her hand against her forehead and looked down.

The both of them had become careless because they were too engrossed in their discussion, but it seemed like Acies had already woken up when they were steadily getting occupied by the conversation. But for them to not notice that Acies had woken up, Acies probably intentionally acted so that they would not find out.

Anyways, Acies must have ran up to the second floor when the both of them were not paying attention and summarized the conversation to Maou in her own unique way.

“It-it’s not like that, erhm, it’s probably an error in speech.....”

“I don’t care if it’s a speech error, mosquito net or protective covering, damn you. You can’t casually make these kinds of jokes.”

(T/N: Speech error, mosquito net and protective covering sound similar in Japanese.)

“A-anyway it’s that! Maou-san, who even helps his enemies, is the model Demon King! How cool!”

“If you want to praise someone, then look at me in the eyes and say it.”

“T-the Demon King is amazing! L-let’s applause!”

“Suzuno, if you do something which doesn’t fit your style at all, you will immediately regret it afterwards.”

“I will remember it well! Or more like, I’m regretting it already!”

Suzuno, blushing greatly, said this frantically.

“E-erhm, what happened with Acies?”

“I locked her in.”

Maou answered while pointing at his head.

“If I do not tie her up with rope, who knows what commotion she would cause or what things she will carelessly say. In this aspect, that idiot is more troublesome than Emi.”

It seemed like Acies was being treated like a dog.

Then, the moment he said ‘that idiot,’ Maou’s face twisted in unhappiness.

It was probably because Acies, in her merged state, was protesting violently.

“.....Both of you are lucky, Kiski-san is in the store today, you can think of it as Kiski-san saving your lives. Are you done talking?”

““Y-yes.....””

Suzuno and Rika both showed compliant expressions.

“Both of you can just let me clear your trays..... please come back again.”

As they felt a faint aura of the Demon King’s assertiveness from Maou’s expression, the two of them left the store directly.

“Does that expression show any sign of shrinking distance.....”

“I have become rather uncertain as well.”

The two of them walked to the front of Hatagaya station in a listless manner.

“Ah, oh no.”

“Is something wrong?”

Just as Rika was searching through her bag to find her monthly train pass, Suzuno frowned in surprise.

“Uh, I forgot to tell the Demon King some things. Forget it, since he needs to work until late night, it can’t be helped.....”

“Although I don’t know what it is about, we will only get chased out if we turn back now, why don’t you send him a message?”

“Guess I can only do that.”

Suzuno took out her mobile phone and started to type a message with clumsy movements.

“Alright, just like this.....”

Suzuno, who finally finished typing and confirmed that there was nothing strange, stopped her finger when she was about to press the Send button.

“.....”

“W-why did you suddenly stop?”

Seeing that Suzuno’s expression was frozen like a doll whose clockwork had stopped, Rika asked this in surprise.

“Then again, this is the first time right.”

Suzuno mumbled to herself, and started to move the clockwork in her body once again.

“Is something wrong?”

“No, it’s nothing serious. I just noticed that Although we have been neighbours for a long time, this is the first time I am sending a message to the Demon King.”

To be exact, until recently, she did not even know Maou’s mail address.

Although she had already recorded the phone number very early on just in case, because both of them were neighbors who still met each other almost every day despite having an adversarial relationship, it would be faster to communicate through the windows if something happened, so there was no need to send messages.

Suzuno only got to know Maou’s mail address recently.

That was when they headed to Ente Isla in order to find Emi.

“W-what’s wrong? Is what you forgotten to tell him that important?”

“No, it’s not that serious.”

Rika asked in a troubled manner because of Suzuno's hesitant attitude.

Suzuno shook her head with a rather melancholy expression.

“I just feel that for a first sent message, the contents are a little too boring.”

Suzuno operated the message screen with the already typed out contents once again, opened up a function that she normally did not use when sending messages to Emi or Chiho, and added it into the words.

“Seriously, it's too boring.”

After saying that, she pressed the Send button.

After confirming that the message was sent, Suzuno folded up her phone and turned towards Rika again.

“Honestly speaking, I am unsure of what happened today either. But after I know of the details, I will definitely contact Rika-dono, can I ask you to wait for a while longer?”

“Yeah. Although I probably would not be of much help, if there is a need to organize an event to cheer Emi up, then let me be the organizer. Then, it’ll be going back first. Help me say hi to the others.”

“Yeah. Be careful on the way home.”

Waving her hand, Rika disappeared within Hatagaya station, Suzuno also turned around and walked towards the direction of the apartment.

“If I say something that does not fit my style, I will quickly regret it later. I know that as well.”

Suzuno took out her mobile phone once again, and opened the message which she had already sent.

The recipient of the message would mostly likely be the top row only on Emi’s and Chiho’s screens, and showed the two words ‘Demon King.’

“However, in a strange fashion, I am not regretting it now.”

After reading the message she sent Maou once again, Suzuno began to head home on the nighttime Sasazuka streets with light steps.

“Hey! Maa-kun.”

After Suzuno and Rika returned, Acies in her merged state also sullenly slept because she was full. With the ending of the peak dinner period, it was already past 9pm.

“Yes?”

“Your locker in the employee room, a sound of a heavy object falling seemed to have come from within, did your mobile phone or wallet fall out from one of the pockets?”

“Eh, really?”

“Because it was really loud, I got a shock, I won’t care if it breaks, okay. Hurry and go take a look.”

“Eh, ah, I’m sorry.”

Maou frantically opened the locker, and discovered that the new mobile phone which he made Emi buy after much effort was at the bottom.

The light at the back of the mobile phone was constantly flashing, notifying the owner that a new message was received. The mobile phone probably fell down because it vibrated when receiving this message.

After opening the mobile phone on reflex, the contents were actually a message sent by Suzuno.

“What is she planning to do again..... hm?”

Maou recalled that it was still working hours, so he quickly kept his mobile phone and closed the door of the locker before returning to work.

“.....Kisaki-san, I have put up the earnings report for 9pm.”

“Hm? Ah, yeah, thanks for the work.”

Maou exited the employee room directly and planned to quickly return to work.

“Maa-kun, what’s wrong, your face seems a little pale.”

But he was stopped by Kawada on the way.

Although Maou had a sense of self-awareness, was the change of his complexion that huge?

“No..... erhm.....”

He did not know what Suzuno was thinking. Not only did she say strange things to Acies, she even sent that kind of message.

After Acies got up, he probably had to be prepared to face a huge disaster.

“I..... don’t really want to go home today.....”

“Huh?”

“If possible, I hope I can spent the night somewhere else.....”

“What disgusting things are you saying. Did you hit your head?”

Kawada said this harshly.

“Why don’t you leave the closing up duties to me. Why don’t you go back earlier? Your roommates and beautiful neighbour are waiting for you right.”

Kawada's half joking casual remark caused Maou to react strongly.

“It seems like a more troublesome person is waiting for meeee! I don't want to go back, there will definitely be something troublesome waiting for me at home! Although I just want to do my own job, in the end, everyone just causes trouble for me, what is going on, bastard, solve your own problems, seriously!”

“M-Maa-kun?”

“Suzuno as well, what is that message! Although I just told her not to do things which don't suit her style!”

In a rare scene, Maou expressed his true emotions at work and rushed up to the second floor.

“Did I..... say something bad?”

Kawada looked upstairs in a stunned manner.

However, it was not strange for Maou to be this frantic.

The message Suzuno sent, these were the contents----

“Hurry up and come back after work ends ♥ Emilia is waiting for you ♥”

“I don’t want to go home~~”

Maou got off work at midnight and was walking home while pushing Dullahan II.

After he received Suzuno’s message, Maou kept making small mistakes at work, causing him to feel more depressed.

Maou opened his mobile phone and read Suzuno’s message again, and stopped walking after a light sigh.

“Could it be..... that she’s still waiting at this time?”

Even if he treated the heart symbol as an act of muddle-headedness frequently shown by Suzuno, why was Emi waiting at his home?

From Emi’s state when she was at Shinjuku Sanchome station, Maou did not think that she could talk to Lailah or Amane calmly. Maou had thought that Emi had already returned to Eifuku together with Emerada.

If the person waiting was Chiho, he could still understand it.

Actually Chiho's home was not safe.

According to social norms, living with her parents, Chiho would naturally have to go home when it was nighttime, but as someone who was not a sorcerer, not a demon, and did not have any defense spells, to return to a place so far away from the apartment in this situation, it was a choice which really required some courage.

He heard that Amane and Shiba were willing to provide assistance, but this time, Amane also spent some time to reach the scene.

So if they were worried about Chiho's parents, leaving Chiho at a place where Maou, Suzuno or Shiba could see her for protection, then Maou could still understand it.

However now, the one waiting at his home was Emi.

Emi, whom everyone agreed would be unharmed even if she was attacked from behind by a tank, why was she staying at the apartment and waiting for Maou to come home?

Then again, from the time Suzuno had sent the message, the one who allowed Emi to stay at the apartment to wait should have been Nord or Ashiya.

“I really do not wish to find out that they are in middle of arguing when I return..... sigh.”

As he ignored Lailah in Urushihara’s hospital room, and continuously rejected interacting with her after that, Maou thus still did not know where Lailah lived. However, if Emi and Lailah ended up having the world’s worst mother-daughter quarrel at Villa Rosa Sasazuka someday, Japan might just be destroyed.

“Sigh, it feels like tonight is as quiet as normal, so that kind of thing would probably not happen right.”

Maou stopped walking, pushed down the bike stand of Dullahan II, turned around and said, “So, is it your turn to kill time with me next?”

“Ah, I was discovered.”

“Why do you think that you wouldn’t be discovered.”

When Maou turned around, he saw the archangel who wore a robe and a T-shirt as usual—Gabriel was standing there.

Since Gabriel had a large build, and was a very irritating existence himself, at this time when there were no pedestrians, it was more difficult not to notice him.

“Mi-chan was the one who sent me. Wasn’t the most unexpected target Emilia attacked? So she asked me to be the bodyguard of the residents of the apartment who are moving around alone.”

“I don’t need a bodyguard.”

“Everyone had thought that Emilia didn’t need one either, and she still got attacked right?”

“Regardless, I just don’t want you as a bodyguard.”

“Don’t be like that. I am just following my superior’s orders and taking action.”

“Who the heck is your superior!”

“Ah, there’s no need to worry about Sasaki Chiho. I have already sent her home, and set up strict security surveillance around her house, so we would be able to handle it immediately even if something happens.”

“No one asked you about that, it doesn’t matter if you sent Chi-chan home or did something around her house, when I hear it, I can only think of shady things, you damn bastard.”

“How is it possible for angels to do shady things?”

“Did you forget what you said to Chi-chan the first time we met?”

“Ahaha~”

This time, Maou truly felt very tired, and sat down on the spot.

“What, are you too tired since you just got off work?”

“Wasn’t it you who gave me the final blow..... hey, is Emi really waiting for me at the apartment?”

“Eh? Ah, now that you mentioned it, she is there. Although Sasaki Chiho went home at around 10pm, she was still there at that time. I’m not sure about what happened afterwards.”

“I wonder if she can hurry up and go back already..... don’t drag me into this mother-daughter quarrel.....”

“Oh my, even if you say that, you only have one home to go back to! Come, stand up, King of Demons! Cheer up and move forward! Buck up and go home, the food Alsiel made is waiting for you!”

“Ahhhhhh, seriously, although I am working so hard, can’t you just give me a life such that I’m able to concentrate on my work in a stable manner, damn it!”

The frivolous words of Gabriel, who could only be described as annoying, completely struck Maou down such that he started to feel like squatting down on the spot.

However, he felt that nothing good would come out of it even if he squatted down here, so without any other choice, Maou could only continue pushing his bicycle forward, and Gabriel also followed at his side.

“Hey, can I ask you about something?”

“What.”

Maou answered without looking up.

“Why are you unwilling to hear Lailah out?”

“Because I don’t have a reason to hear her out.”

“Why?”

“It’s nothing much, if you wanted to hear some complicated reason, then you’re going to be disappointed, I really don’t have any reason to hear her out.”

Maou said in an expressionless tone.

“I am thankful that she saved my life in the past. Although I am thankful, I have been manipulated by her for quite some time. And I even saved her life today. Even with the interest, I stopped owing her favours a long time ago.”

“Hm, yeah, I see. Although I said I see, but in actuality, I still don’t understand it well. Although a lot of commotions happened in Japan earlier, you had always handled them in a flexible manner every time, so this reaction isn’t like you. You won’t lose anything even if you spoke up for Lailah right?”

“What is the loss which you’re referring to?”

“You also know that the children of the ‘Yesod’ are closely related to Lailah right? You won’t lose out from hearing a bit about what will happen from now on right?”

“Gabriel, have you raised a child before?”

“Huh?”

Maou suddenly asked this in return, causing Gabriel to blink in surprise.

“When I first started living together with Alas=Ramus, I immediately started considering the possibility of buying insurance.”

“Insurance? Not the one for seeing doctors, but life insurance or fire insurance, those kinds? Is the Demon King that concerned about long term risk management?”

Gabriel started to think about what kind of insurance a Demon King would buy, but if he listened carefully, he would have known that Maou did not buy any insurance in the end.

“The insurance fees are not a small sum, and I still have to settle miscellaneous things like a health check diagnosis, so I still did not buy one in the end. As for why I had considered this kind of thing, it was because I realized that although the chances aren’t high, I could die because of you.”

“Ah, was it my fault?”

Gabriel clapped suddenly.

He remembered that at that time, he had considered killing off the Demon King and releasing the power.

“However, the reason why people want to buy insurance is mainly because they do not know what will happen in the future, in order to guard against bad things happening in the future, they will insure beforehand.”

“Hm, that is correct.”

The two of them had already walked to a place where they could see the lights of Villa Rosa Sasazuka from far away.

“On the flip side, because we don’t know what will happen in the future, that is why we have this insurance company business.”

“Yeah, that’s true.”

“I don’t want to know what will happen to Alas=Ramus in the future.”

“For a guardian, is it the right thing to do? Since you can predict that bad things will happen in the future, wouldn’t it be better to know it earlier?”

“What if the bad thing which can be predicted was something which cannot be avoided at all, what then?”

Maou pointed this out sharply.

“Although you weren’t present at that time, the Landlady had said before that Alas=Ramus and Acies would have to return to Heaven where all of you are, it’s that Landlady you know. That Landlady has been in contact with Lailah since much earlier. So as long as I listen to Lailah, Alas=Ramus and Acies would have to return to Heaven. But Emi and I do not plan to do this. We do not want Alas=Ramus to go to a faraway place. Alas=Ramus doesn’t want to be separated from us either. Then, it would be best for things to remain as they are now.”

“.....Although I don’t have the right to say this, many things cannot be avoided even if you don’t know about them, right?”

“It’s true that I don’t want to hear you say this. You should be careful, although she is asleep right now, every time Acies sees you, she would say that she wants to kill you. If she takes the opportunity to act when you’re asleep and the Landlady isn’t paying attention, I won’t care what happens.”

“Ah~ Actually, I have been attacked at night a few times already.”

“Then why don’t you just die like that.”

“So mean~ Saying that kind of thing is really too mean~”

While they were talking, the both of them were walking forward, and when they returned to Villa Rosa Sasazuka, it was almost 1am.

Maou pushed down the bike stand of Dullahan II, and turned towards Gabriel again.

“Thank you for the escort, you can go back now.”

“At least let me listen to the end. It would bother me a lot you know.”

“Listen to the end, which part is considered the end.....”

Maou humphed like he thought it was troublesome.

“.....This is what I feel the most dissatisfied about.”

“Eh?”

“Many things cannot be avoided even if you don’t know about it. If that is really the case, perhaps we should really try to understand what you and Lailah did in the past, however,” Maou pointed at his own chest and said softly, “Why do we have to know these things and work hard for it? We have no responsibility to carry this burden.”

“Even if the world will be destroyed?”

“I don’t care.”

“The future of your descendants might end up being cut off you know?”

“If the descendants of the humans become extinct, then it is good for the demons, as for the descendants of the demons, I will already be dead by then, so the guys in the future can work hard and solve it themselves.”

“You have power, and it’s a power which other people do not have, although that power might solve the problem, you’re not going to take action?”

After that, the King of Demons smirked, and said, “.....So you finally said what you truly felt?”

“Eh?”

“Then let me ask you in return. ‘Why do we have to be asked in a one-sided manner to take up a strange responsibility simply because we have power.’”

“Oh..... ohhh?”

Momentarily unable to keep up with Maou’s logic, Gabriel was speechless.

“Anyway, all of you just want to create another ‘Hero Emilia, only you have the power to defeat Demon King Satan, go and defeat the Demon King spectacularly’ drama right?”

At this instant, Maou suddenly became expressionless.

“How does this benefit Emi. Well?”

“Uh.....”

“Emi has many reasons for killing me. I did do many mean things to her, that person wanted to take revenge on me based on her own will. However, the humans of Ente Isla used that feeling of hers, and pushed off the responsibility which they should also carry together to her right? Just because she had power.”

That was the sin of all the humans who lived in Ente Isla, which caused Emerada to be deeply regretful.

That sin even caused Emi to be imprisoned in Afashan, placing her heart in chains.

“She forced me to a stage where she was very close to defeating me, and because I ran away, she chased after me, and when she really had a chance to defeat me, she was betrayed by a comrade. Before I, Emerada, Alberto, and Suzuno tried to find ways to interfere, those humans were all manipulated by Heaven, why does Emi have to save the future of those people? As for me, it’s obvious. I don’t have any reason to save them.”

“.....Because you dislike the humans of Ente Isla who have sinned heavily?”

“You still don’t understand huh.”

The corners of Maou’s mouth lifted up in scorn towards Gabriel.

“Why do Emi and I have to abandon our current stable and smooth sailing life to assist in your completely outdated plan. Such a joke.”

“Ehhhh? H-how can you just make decisions on your own like that.....”

“Which side is the one making decisions on their own.”

Maou mumbled to himself.

“Let me ask you, does it mean that wealthy people have an obligation to give their money to all the poor people in the world, and become penniless instead?”

“Uh.....”

“Does it mean that poor people only have to open their mouths like baby birds and just wait for charity from other people?”

Gabriel, unable to rebuke, fell silent.

“Just because Emi and I have a power stronger than everyone else, we have an obligation to abandon our own lives and help all the humans in the world? Oh, who was it that wanted us to bear that kind of responsibility?”

Maou’s voice contained a clear mix of anger and frustration.

“That attitude which all of you have is what I am unhappy about. You have power, so you’re willing to help right. To come with that attitude, that means

that all of you think that even if you use that attitude, we would say that's right, because we have a responsibility, so we will work hard."

"It, it's not that exaggerated..... then again, it's late at night, please be quieter....."

"Am I wrong? Then tell me what all of you mean?"

"Not, not considering what I feel, at least Lailah is not like that, she put her life on the line and worked hard to prevent the destruction from occurring, and she was trying her best to recover Ente Isla to its correct state while protecting Emilia and Nord....."

"Oh, I see, that's why she was showing that kind of attitude, I understand it well now."

In a rare occurrence, Gabriel actually spoke up for someone, but Maou ignored it completely.

"So it's like that after all, you people are the kind who think that metal will not break even if it is damaged."

"Eh? M-metal?"

Maou suddenly changed the topic, giving Gabriel a shock.

“Metal is strong right? It won’t break even if it withstands a little impact, and would be able to maintain strong characteristics no matter how damaged it is.”

“Y-yeah, that’s right.....”

“So it can be hit?”

“Eh?”

“I’m asking if you can hit it just because it won’t get hurt!”

Maou’s tone had completely changed to that of anger.

As if in response to Maou’s voice, a dog’s bark could be heard from somewhere in town.

“As long as it’s sturdy, then we can throw, kick and hit it? As long as it’s a material that cannot be easily damaged, then using it in a rough way is the right method? As long as someone has power, it’s alright no matter what kind of treatment they get? Me, Emi, Ashiya, Urushihara, and Suzuno, as long as we follow your methods, would the both of you be able to guarantee our

lifestyle in the future? Or are you saying that our life, compared to the bigger matters such as the world or the future of the humans, is only considered a small matter?”

“.....Ah~ yeah, I see, so that’s how it is.”

Gabriel, finally understanding Maou’s heated argument, nodded lightly.

“The ‘I see’ this time means that I understand.”

“.....Do you really understand?”

“I understand. It’s like after going to the house of someone who talks about environmental conversation until you’re tired of it, you realized that the lights of his room are always on and his air conditioner is on a high setting. With this, you’ll definitely feel that this guy is really strange.”

“.....From the example you’ve given, you’re also very used to this world now.”

This was the first time Maou relaxed his expression tonight.

“Anyways, that’s how it is. Although Lailah seems to hope that we can help her do something, we have no reason, responsibility or obligation to hear her

out, listening to her has no benefits as well. Currently, the political situation in Ente Isla is stable, peace has returned to the Demon World, and even Heaven had cut off all contact with Earth. The only remaining problem is chasing away the person who scared Chi-chan and Emi..... and also, thinking about how to settle the relationship between Emi and me. When all of this is settled, we will continue living our lives based on our own will. We will not allow any of you to interfere in any way.”

“Even though there are many points to rebut.”

Gabriel gave a wry smile.

“But the life you want to live, simply put, would be hoping to conquer Ente Isla once again right? We might act to stop you, you know?”

“That doesn’t matter, my ambition would meet with obstructions in the first place, and getting rid of those people who obstruct me also originates from my will. However, being thrown on a stage prepared by other people, being controlled by the chain formed by someone’s kindness, that is not my will. although you said just now that I solved a lot of troubles, the reason why I did it was because if I did not get rid of those troubling things, it would bring danger to me or the people around me, I have never thought about doing something for the world.”

“I understand, I understand, it seems like Lailah misunderstood you completely, she misunderstood your strong will for unifying that Demon

World at a young age, and your understanding towards your comrades. If this goes on, no matter how many hundreds of years pass, you guys still won't hear her out, right?"

"As long as you understand. Then, it's about time for me to go back. You should hurry up and go back too."

"Yeah, let's do that."

Maou bid farewell to Gabriel at the bottom of the common staircase, but after Maou walked up the stairs, Gabriel shouted towards him, "But, telling me these things, might be a bad move for you."

"What did you say?"

Faced with a surprised Maou, Gabriel smiled in a pleased manner,

"Ne, because I am better at the ways of the world compared to you."

"Whatever you say. I don't care how you and Lailah work together behind my back. Either way, compared to Lailah, I am even more reluctant to hear you out."

"Alright alright. Let's stop here for today. Then, good night."

“Oh.”

“Also.”

“Hm?”

“Be careful on your way back.”

“Huh?”

“Although I don’t know if you’re aware of it, you have to be responsible for what you say.”

After saying this meaningful sentence, wearing slippers in this cold weather, Gabriel walked back to Shiba’s house with light footsteps.

He had already walked to the place where he would be able to see the door of room 201 after opening the door of the common staircase, Maou really could not understand what else he had to be careful about.....

“Sigh~ 1am huh, damn. Ashiya and Urushihara should be asleep right?”

Maou, who wasted time because he spoke with Gabriel, opened the door to the common staircase with a frown—

“Ugoh!”

Then could not help but shout out loud and back up.

“W-w-what are you doing! You haven’t gone back yet?”

Emi was standing there.

Because the florescent light of the public corridor was behind her, Emi’s expression could not be seen clearly, but seeing that the clothes she was wearing were the same as what was seen at Shinjuku Sanhome station, it appeared that Emi had not gone home at all.

Just like Maou predicted, the lights of room 201 and 202 were turned off, so Ashiya, Urushihara, and Suzuno should already be asleep.

From this situation, Maou deduced that Emi should be staying at Suzuno’s room tonight, then when everyone else was already asleep, why was Emi the only one who was awake and standing there like a wandering ghost?

“Ah..... could it be, I woke you up? S-sorry.”

With the current situation, Maou quietly made his excuses.

As he almost quarreled with Gabriel outside, so Maou did speak very loudly.

Emi could have been woken up when she was about to sleep, so she came here to wait for Maou in order to complain.

“E-erhm, didn’t you and Chi-chan encounter trouble today? Then the Landlady worried too much and sent Gabriel to be my bodyguard. Because he said many unnecessary things, I could not help but shout at him loudly..... actually sending an archangel to be the bodyguard of the Demon King, that’s really too funny. Haha, hahaha..... Emi?”

When Maou spoke to this part, he realized that the other party was not reacting at all. This caused Maou to feel a little awkward.

“Emi? W-what’s wrong? Hey.....”

Maou tried to wave his hand in front of her eyes, but there was no reaction.

“.....You came back too late, Alas=Ramus waited for you until she fell asleep.....”

“O-oh? B-but you should know right, my shift today is until closing.....”

In the end, Maou was unable to say the word ‘time.’

He felt a gust of wind.

When he came back to his senses, Emi was already hugging him.

“Ughhh?”

He was going to be killed!

Maou seriously thought this. Although he did not know what Emi was unhappy about, probably being woken up when she was about to fall asleep made her very unhappy.

He felt the touch of Emi’s arm around his neck, Maou froze as he predicted that his head was going to be cut off.

Even if he wanted to control the demonic magic within the closet of room 201, it was already too late.

After arriving in Japan from the final battle of Ente Isla, Emi had mercilessly attacked Maou many times before, but this was the first time she used such a forceful method in such a direct manner.

Is this the end?

However, even if Maou's body froze in mental preparation, that instant still did not occur.

“Oh?”

Maou, who discovered that he was still alive five seconds later, opened his eyes which he had closed on reflex.

“.....”

“E-erhm.....?”

Emi's head appeared under his field of vision.

His shoulders and neck could slightly feel Emi's weight.

Emi pressed her face against his chest.

What situation was this? It looked like he was not going to get a Throat Locking Finishing Move once they met, but how it turned into this situation, Maou really did not understand at all.

“It’s alright.”

“Huh?”

A voice clearer than what he imagined was heard from the area near his chest.

“It’s alright.”

Emi said it once again, confusing Maou even further. He did not even know what was considered being alright, and he could not hear any abnormal feelings of anger from Emi’s voice, but anyway, he had already understood that Emi was not angry right now.

Even if he understood, his brain, which was slowly calming down at the same time, started analyzing how this situation would look like to others, which caused Maou’s blood pressure to fall gradually.



If this was seen, no matter who it was, they would probably come up with an explanation similar to the one Suzuno and Rika had made in a joking manner. As for the term ‘join together’ which Acies heard from Suzuno and Rika, Maou had never thought of any meaning other than physical contact, and regretfully, what Maou and Emi were doing right now was true physical contact.

Maou discovered that he had to calmly get away from this current situation.

Acies could acutely sense any wavering in Maou’s heart or mental state. Even if this was not based off telepathy or Idea Link, since the both of them were merged, it could not be helped at all.

However, if Acies woke up at this time, from tomorrow onwards, the surrounding gazes directed towards Maou would definitely be as cold as flying to parallel worlds or universes in other dimensions.

“I-”

“O-oh.”

Although he did not know what Emi was thinking at all, from how her voice was very calm, Maou knew that she must have done this because of a certain clear reason.

Even so, carelessly agitating her and worsening the situation was not a good move. Maou understood that continuing to stiffen his body and listen to Emi speak was currently the best move.

“Have never had the thought of hoping someone would come to save me. Because once my body grew up, I was already able to handle almost everything by myself.”

“Is, is that so. Sigh, you are the Hero, the strongest human after all.”

“In addition, even if I didn’t say anything, when there was a need to, Em, Alber and Olba would still help me in the past. This is probably what it means to be able to read each other’s thoughts. So during the process of going to kill you, even if I felt that it was difficult, I have never thought of giving up.”

“.....I see. That’s rather nice.”

Even if these were words which clearly did not match the current situation, Maou still decided to nod first.

“However, earlier in Afashan.....”

“Oh, oh, that time huh.”

Maou, not knowing what Emi wanted to say, could only continuously echo what she said. However, what Emi said next was something he totally did not expect.

“That was the first one someone told me that he would ‘protect me.’”

“.....Huh?”

There were two reasons why Maou felt troubled.

The first one was that he was simply unable to understand any hidden meanings within Emi’s words.

The second one was because Emi’s body started to shiver slightly.

“.....Why, is it you.”

“W-what.....”

“Why is the only person willing to protect me, is you who messed up my life.....?”

“.....”

Maou was not the kind of man who could not read the atmosphere and say that he was not the only person who was willing to protect you.

Simply put, Emi was complaining.

Emi definitely had not forgotten the friendship and contributions of Emerada, Alberto, Chiho, Rika, and Suzuno.

It was just that her heart was so tired that she could not even support these memories.

When Emi's heart was traumatized because of the Afashan incident, Lailah's appearance caused her heart to waver even more. If so, it would be better to allow her to vent everything out at once.

If he could avoid dying like this, then currently it would be a better move to work on laying out sandbags.

“In the past, Father has always been the one to protect me.”

“Yeah.”

“However, because of you, he disappeared.”

“I have nothing to say about that part.”

“Then, I had to continue protecting other people. Because I..... have the strongest power.”

“That’s right.”

“It’s the same even now, I am stronger than anyone else..... so.....”

Emi’s shoulder’s shook lightly.

“Father is not protecting me anymore.”

Maou clearly understood that all of Emi’s dark thoughts had been condensed into this sentence.

Nord, who had reunited with Emi, ended up becoming an existence whom she had to protect instead.

Even so, Emi still hoped that the presence of her father could become her mental support.

However, inside Urushihara's hospital room, her father protected her mother.

Faced with the overwhelming power of his daughter whom he had protected by putting his life on the line, rather than his daughter's heart, Nord chose to protect his wife's safety with his life.

Ever since Lailah appeared at that place, no matter what they did, they would not be able to peacefully rebuild their family again.

“Only you.”

“Huh?”

“Only you are willing to protect me who became stronger than anyone else. Only you who should have messed up my life, just you.”

“.....Are you muddled by sleep?”

“I am not muddled by sleep, and I'm not drunk either.”

“Of course, you're still underage after all.”

“I am 20 years old on my registration card. Even if I drink, I won’t get arrested by the Japanese police.”

“That really doesn’t sound like something a Hero would say.”

“I’m not some Hero in the first place. It’s just the people around me who are calling me that. In this world, there is no such occupation at all.”

There were signs of shaking with a smile this time. Emi smiled while crying.

The force hugging Maou grew a little stronger.

“This is really a demon’s temptation. You’re the only one who says what I want to hear the most. Even just now.....”

Maou’s face turned pale once again.

Could it be that Gabriel said those things because he knew Emi was here?

Although he did have no choice, in some places of what he said just now, he did imply that Emi and Suzuno were included in the people around him who he should protect.

“F-from where did you start listening?”

Hearing Maou’s hoarse voice, Emi spoke like she was rubbing salt into the wound,

“I have been waiting for you to come back with Alas=Ramus the whole time. So everything you said after you returned to the apartment, I heard everything.”

“.....That sucks, how can such an embarrassing thing happen, which God with a bad personality is playing a prank, that bastard.”

Maou tried to recall the conversation he had with Gabriel and showed a wry smile.

“I also feel that it’s about time to only live for myself. But somewhere in my heart, I still think that I shouldn’t do such a thing. Em, Bell, and Chiho-chan all respect my decisions. However, I still cannot abandon the self-responsibility that I should use my power for my comrades after all. It’s not like I don’t want to protect Chiho-chan or the people around me, but in the end, I still cannot solve anything by myself. Why does everyone call me a Hero when I am like this? Although I have power, forget about my friends, I can’t even protect myself. In addition, being saved by someone like Lailah, I can’t bear anymore this burden. I can’t..... uu!”

Emi's voice started to shake, and her tears and chaotic thoughts started to overflow together, yet Maou did not return Emi's hug.

He just let Emi rant.

This was just ranting. Preaching logic to someone who was ranting would do nobody any good.

“I clearly cannot achieve anything. However, everyone says I am the Hero. Since you have power, then fight for us, lend us power..... I can't even protect myself already, what does everyone want me to do.....”

“I hope you can quickly finish your training, and become an independently working employee.”

“.....”

Like she received a fright, Emi stopped sobbing.

“.....Recently, I don't really dislike the fact that you don't waver at all.”

“Because I have always honestly spoke my mind.”

“On the contrary, you also hide things from other people all the time.”

“If people live their lives with their decks revealed, then it won’t be enough no matter how many aces they have, right.”

Maou sighed, and took the initiative to touch Emi’s shoulder for the first time.

“Let me say this first, I did not say those things to Gabriel in order to get in your good books. You better get this clear.”

“I know that. That’s why..... it makes people happy, doesn’t it?”

“Huh?”

“Because it’s something which came from your heart, that’s why it’s pleasant to hear. Although you might deny it, when you’re acting cold towards me, you still treat me as your comrade at the same time..... no, treating me like a neighbour and protecting me.”

“That is because there is a need to.....”

“Even if you were forced by circumstances, there aren’t many people who are willing to protect me.”

“.....It seems like you received a really huge mental blow.”

“That’s right. It’s so huge that I am saying such things to the Demon King.”

Leaving Maou’s chest and looking at him with a tearful smile, the swollen corners of Emi’s eyes were still a little wet.

“Thank you, Demon King. I’m sturdy in the first place, so I will recover with just a little maintenance.”

“I noticed that you’re in a rather bad state recently. As long as your system doesn’t malfunction because you’re too overworked, then that’s fine.”

“Hm, I am having a serious malfunction today. It can’t be seen as a normal state.”

Emi sighed lightly, backed up one step away from Maou—

“.....Emi?”

However, she held Maou’s hand this time.

“Can I ask you one question.....?”

“Huh?”

“If, I become weaker and weaker, just like this.....will you still be willing to protect me?”

“Hey, is your serious malfunction still persisting. What are you saying.”

“Didn’t I say that my state today cannot be seen as normal?”

Emi said with a slight blush.

Maou looked towards the watch on his left hand which was being held by Emi and discovered at it was almost 1:30am, he sighed once again.

“No matter how much the world changes, the truth still won’t change right.”

“Eh?”

“The you who felt proud of the title of ‘Hero’ did exist before, right?”

“.....Huh.”

What Maou was talking about, was an incident which happened in the past.

Meeting Maou in Japan, Chiho knowing the truth of Ente Isla, that incident which occurred at Sasazuka that day.

“I’m not that self-aware, so even if I really did protect you, it must be only because you, who is strong, encountered a situation which you cannot solve no matter what. I have no interest in a weak you.”

“.....Although I am in a malfunctioning state right now, you’re still saying these things.”

“There is nothing wrong with being weak, but I hate people who use their weakness as a weapon,” Maou said nonchalantly. “The you whom I acknowledge, is the you who proclaims yourself as the Hero and struggles with all your might to help your friends. It’s fine if it’s just an occasional malfunction, but my Demon King Army does not need people who are weak even in normal circumstances. The title of ‘Demon General’ can only be bestowed on strong people who will not lose to anyone in spirit, technique, and physical strength.”

“.....I see.”

Emi nodded like she understood, and finally let go of Maou’s hand.

“Not considering technique and physical strength, I don’t want other people to think that I lost to Lucifer in spirit.”

“Uwah, so mean.”

“Because it’s really like that right?”

“Sigh, even if we do not consider the Demon King Army for the moment, if you lose to Urushihara in real life, then considering it normally, something should have gone wrong somewhere.”

“Ahaha.”

Emi finally let out a lively laugh.

For unknown reasons, that smile caused Maou to feel that it was very precious.

“You are my enemy after all, I look forward to you telling me that the kind words were a mistake.”

“And it’s a huge mistake, to the point where people will think what kind of stupid things you are saying. Even if you’re not my enemy, the current you doesn’t have that right at all.”

“That’s right, I think so as well, you were really mysteriously useless today.”

“As a human, occasionally being depressed is fine. But because there will be strange reactions from the surroundings, you should at least remember not to do things that will cause other people to misunderstand.”

“Oh my.”

Emi smiled with a red face.

“If someone sees us hugging, I wonder what kind of misunderstandings will occur?”

“Pick your words properly, we weren’t hugging. It’s you who lunged over once you saw me.”

“Can you not talk about it like it was a traffic accident.”

“To me, this is the most serious crash incident to date.”

Maou scolded in an extremely serious manner. But strangely, Emi's mood did not appear to get worse at all.

“I'm so hurt.”

“Whatever you say. Then I'm going to sleep, I still have to work tomorrow.”

Maou walked past Emi and walked up the common corridor, and reached towards the door of room 201.

“Yeah, thank you. Sorry for disturbing you until so late.”

“.....Oh.”

Even if a voice was heard from behind him, Maou did not look back.

He unlocked the door and entered the room, and closed the door behind him without looking at Emi.

The moonlight shone within the room from the cracks in the curtains, Ashiya and Urushihara, who was unable to stay in the cupboard, were both sleeping on the tatami. The Hero had been waiting for the Demon King to return home the whole time, there should be a limit to how carelessly these two Demon Generals were acting.

The rice cooker was turned off, three rice balls sprinkled with three seasonings were wrapped in cling film and placed on the kotatsu.

The shape of every rice ball was crooked and was a little different from the rice balls which Maou normally ate.

“What is going on.....”

Maou said with a soft voice which should not be heard by Emi who was next door.

“It’s made so badly.”

After saying this scornfully, he picked up the rather distorted rice ball.

Chapter 4: Demon King and Hero, Facing a Trade

魔王と勇者、取引を持ちかけられる



“Everyone, it’s finally starting!”

At Kisaki Mayumi’s command, all the employees at the MgRonalds in front of Hatagaya station straightened their posture.

“Although we have encountered many difficulties, today, the store in front of Hatagaya station is finally officially operating with the reputation of offering delivery services!”

The dice had been thrown.

From 10am today, the store in front of Hatagaya station was officially providing delivery services.

Three GYRO ROOFs for the delivery service had been allocated to the store.

On the body of the bike, which was painted completely red, the shining MgRonalds logo looked very vibrant.

“For the employees responsible for delivery on this memorable first day, I hope you can recall what you learned during training, and perform your duties with all your might.”

“Understood!”

All the employees on morning shift responded together.

The employees who were chosen to be in charge of the delivery service for the store in front of Hatagaya station for the first day were Maou and Kawada.

Emi was in charge of handling the phone orders, and Kisaki would support all positions depending on the situation.

In other words, if they received orders when Maou and Kawada were both out delivering orders, Kisaki would personally do the delivery, of course when there weren't any delivery orders, Maou, Kawada, and Emi all had to help to handle the normal tasks.

Because it was the first day, even Maou and Kawada showed nervous expressions.

The Happy Delivery by the store in front of Hatagaya station was different from the previous delivery services. There was a characteristic of experimentation involved and the predicted number of orders was more than normal delivery services.

Although Kisasi naturally had expectations for Emi to be the operator in charge of the delivery orders, none of the employees noticed that for the MgRonalds Happy Deliveries in the past, they did not accept phone orders.

For the MgRonalds Happy Deliveries in the past, they had to go through the main website on the internet or an application on the Slimphone to make their orders, then it will automatically choose the nearby store that would provide the delivery service for them to be responsible for the delivery.

However, Kisasi felt that it would not be enough to just depend on that.

She seemed to have shouted at the Area Manager ‘The store in front of Hatagaya station has maintained close connections with the place and the shopping street, how can we not allow people to directly call the store and order?!’

No matter how common the internet was in the boom period for the Slimphone, a customer base which preferred to use traditional systems still existed. Kisasi believed that if delivery is limited to internet orders only, business opportunities in the area would be lost.

“The tradition of ‘takeaway’ built up by soba stores, chinese cuisine stores, pizza stores, and sushi stores over ten years is still deeply implanted within human hearts. Personal information has to be entered when ordering through applications and websites, and compared to the possibility of navigating the website incorrectly when ordering, it would be overwhelmingly simpler to

order via phone and saying what they want directly. Thinking that the young people in the future will only use the internet is an illusion which gives up on the thinkers. Not limited to young people, the consumers will always choose the simplest method at that time.”

Kisaki had said this.

“And in the future ten years where the low birth rate issue is getting more and more serious, we need to target the generation which is not familiar with the internet. Even if the whole communication network will be consolidated on the internet in the future, if we forget those customers who are satisfied with the traditional systems, even the future that they originally saw will become dark.”

Emi could understand this personally.

When she provided enquiry services at Docodemo, the enquiries from middle aged and elderly people took up a rather huge ratio of their total customer base.

So if the business was not restricted by the concept that only young people would eat hamburgers, there would be a positive impact in future.

“Of course, the jobs other than that of delivery business are also important, so I hope that everyone will fight with the same high standard as usual. Now then, dismissed!”

Under Kisasi’s orders, in order to prepare the morning menu, all of the employees scattered to return to their positions.

“How nostalgic.”

Emi put on the headphones allocated to her, and as she adjusted the position of her microphone, it felt that her emotions were also soaring at the same time.

Just like Emi, starting from today, regardless of whether they were responsible for the second floor café, kitchen or the main hall, all the employees had to put on the wireless headphones for a period of time.

With the increase in the number of employees, the amount and variety of work also increased quickly. In order to quickly pass on information, they brought in this equipment.

Every single time Emi saw the microphone near her mouth, she would have a stronger feeling of ‘she was working right now’ than before.

Amongst all the headphones which all the employees had to wear, only Emi's headphones were a special model which could take orders while answering phone calls.

The customer's address, phone number and other personal details had to be entered into the computer during the delivery, using a normal phone would not be suitable in terms of efficiency or the interaction with the customer, so Kiski specifically brought in this model.

In addition, this headset was an important asset when communicating with the employees when they were carrying out their deliveries.

There were no navigation systems on the delivery mopeds, and not all employees were familiar with the surrounding area. So honestly, in order to prevent employees from getting lost and delaying the delivery, they needed to be able to allow the store to give instructions when unexpected circumstances occur.

Although there was the method of using the Slimphone's map application, not all employees had a Slimphone.

Depending on the number of delivery orders, they also had to consider hiring employees who would specialize in deliveries only.

The employees would have to understand the situation of the store they belonged to, and every store needed to have a few veteran employees, who would be able to carry out all the tasks. Based on this belief of Kisasi's, all the employees would probably go through one round of all the tasks in the end.

“Saemi, can you hear me?”

“.....Ah, yes!”

Kisasi's voice was heard from the headphones, but Emi only responded after a pause.

She still could not react quickly to this method of addressing that she was not used to.

“From your performance during the training period, you're the person who is most suited for this position. You're the only person who has enough ability to command the delivery personnel on the first day. For today, I'll be counting on you.”

“I understand. I will work hard to meet your expectations.”

“I'll be counting on you.”

Kisaki gave a thumbs up to Emi from some distance away to encourage her, and the latter also smiled in response.

※

The ceremony known amongst the employees as the ‘Sacred Naming’ (Giving a nickname) which represented the ‘graduation from the training period’ occurred suddenly the day after ‘that day.’

Which was also the day after the night Emi abnormally said disheartened words to Maou

Unexpectedly, Emi did not regret that at all, and welcomed the morning in a strangely light hearted manner.

Then as she arrived at work before the morning breakfast period, enduring Maou’s unhappy expression, she changed into the MgRonalds uniform which she had finally gotten used to and headed to the main hall—

“Good morning, Saemi.”

Kisaki, who happened to walk past Emi, greeted her with a smile.

“M-morning.....”

Because it was really too sudden, Emi's expression could only be described as flustered.

“Yusa-san, could it be that your training has ended?”

“Eh?”

The more senior female employee who spoke to Emi was as experienced as Maou and Kawada, Ooki Akiko with the nickname ‘Aki-chan.’

“Kisaki-san addressed you with a nickname right?”

“That was considered a nickname?”

“Yeah.”

Akiko said this with a smile like she thought that it was amusing.

“Everyone's expression was like that at the beginning, because it was really too sudden, I got a shock at first as well.”

“Oh.....”

Just as Emi still did not understand the situation that well, Kawada arrived as well.

“In our store, as long as Kisaki addresses you with a nickname, it means that the employee can already work independently, that is our common consensus, what did she call you?”

“Uh, erhm.....”

Because it was too sudden, Emi could not recall it immediately.

“It seemed to be..... oh yes, she called me Saemi.....”

““Ohh.””

After that, Kawada and Akiko showed expressions of surprise.

“It feels like a rare type.”

“Hm, but thinking about it carefully, the full name of Yusa-san is four syllables, so rather than forcefully separating the last name and first name, it might be smoother to address her this way.”

Even if Emi was shocked at her seniors who started discussing greatly about this sudden nicknaming, she immediately noticed a bigger change.

“Saemi, the quality of the stock solution for the oolong tea is lower today, be careful that the light doesn’t turn on during peak hours, okay.”

“Saemi, please clean up Number 10.”

“Saemi, this is the second time you placed the tray in the wrong direction today, it’s easier to make mistakes when it’s busier, so please pay attention.”

Kisaki’s method of speaking had obviously changed.

Before today, Kisaki had always addressed Emi as Yusa-san, and would always use a more respectful tone when giving instructions or guidance, but right now it had turned into the same tone she used when speaking to Maou, Chiho and Kawada.

Although the tone had changed, Kisaki’s instructions or guidance did not become more slipshod or unreasonable because of that.

Emi asked Akiko about this on reflex.

“Ah~ this is just my deduction.”

With this opening sentence, Akiko stated her opinion.

“Aren’t there a lot of difficult tasks in the food and beverage industry? Therefore, some people might resign during the training period. Kisasi probably acted this way in order to avoid giving someone a bad impression during that time. Rather than being more casual during the training period, being more detailed would give someone a better impression.”

This way of thinking was very convincing.

“That’s true, I wouldn’t have noticed if you didn’t mention it, it was like that during my time as well.”

Kawada seemed to have remembered his days as a newbie, and nodded repeatedly to Akiko’s thoughts.

“No matter what, from what I know, the last person who obtained a nickname so early would have to be traced back to Chi-chan. I think after the training ends, the hourly pay should be much higher than before. It looks like I can’t lose either.”

Akiko smiled happily, but Emi could not help but feel nervous.

※

From that day onwards, about half of the employees started to address Emi as ‘Saemi.’

Chiho and Kawada seemed to be used to the previous way of addressing her, so they still called her ‘Yusa-san.’

Then—

“Excuse me, can someone go below and check if there are any backup cleaning brushes, the one upstairs has split so much it can’t be used.”

“Alright, I’m going to look for it now. If there is one, I’ll bring it up.”

“Emi.....o, oh.”

Only Maou addressed her as Emi like usual.

Hearing Maou’s reply, which contained complex feelings, through the headphones, Emi smiled naturally for unknown reasons.

Although Maou's attitude towards Emi inside and outside the store was already almost the same, just like before, Emi still intentionally faced Maou like how she would treat a senior.

Maou was one of the rare veterans among the employees, so if Emi had treated him with the attitude she used while not in the store when she had just joined, there would definitely be people who would be unhappy about it.

Perhaps because he knew this, Maou did not particularly complain about Emi's attitude, but it still felt as if he had rather complex feelings about it.

Unbelievably, when Emi first joined, she was actually half acting when she treated Maou as a senior. Although she did feel irritated when Maou took the chance to put on a senior act, since that night, for unknown reasons, Emi was able to naturally interact with Maou.

Or more accurately, she became able to honestly face Maou with her position as the junior.

“Uhohohohohoho.”

“W-what is it, Aki-chan.”

Seeing Emi follow Maou's instructions to look for the cleaning brushes for the machine, Akiko let out a strange laugh, frightening Kawada a little.

“It’s nothing, I just feel that Saemi has also become very used to this place, right?”

Akiko quickly started to address Emi by her nickname.

“On the other hand, Maou-san recently started acting a little unnaturally, it’s very interesting.”

“Ah..... I don’t understand either of them sometimes. Although it feels like Yusa-san became more relaxed recently.....”

From Kawada’s point of view, until a few days ago, Emi had been carrying some heavy troubles, but these few days, she no longer had a tense air around her.

“Maou-san, Chi-chan, and Saemi, they are friends originally right? Did Kawada notice? Chi-chan had become rather interesting recently too.”

“How should I put this, I feel that Aki-chan seems to have some useless thoughts.”

“Kawa-cchi should have seen through it as well, right. Oh my, these few days, once Chi-chan sees Maou-san and Saemi speaking, her facial expressions will become very strange.”

“How strange is it?”

“Firstly she would show a maternal kind smile, then she would show a thinking expression like a scientist who had some questions, then she would turn pale like a person who saw a ghost.”

“Ah.....”

Kawada nodded vigorously to agree with Akiko, and showed an empty gaze.

“Maa-kun would be stabbed by someone in the back on a moonless path at night sooner or later.”

“Right, right?! Then it should be the same as what I guessed!”

Because Kawada’s analysis was in line with hers, Akiko started to act in an excited manner.

“Aki-chan, Kawa-cchi, what’s wrong, both of you have stopped moving, you know.”

At this moment, Kiski's voice was heard from the headphones, causing both of them to frantically return to their original tasks.

Even before 10am, four preorder calls were received, forcing the store in front of Hatagaya station to feel more nervous.

Because of the computer input, they needed to wait until after 10am to handle the deliveries for the normal meals. Therefore, Emi's first job when responding to these calls was to apologise to the customers regarding this.

Not long after, the clock pointed towards 10am, five minutes after the business operations within the store switched from the breakfast menu to the normal menu.

“There is an online order.”

Hearing Emi's voice through the headphones, the employees who had no tasks to do clapped on reflex.

Kawada immediately carried the black, insulated delivery bags issued by McDonalds for deliveries, put on the elbow and knee guards for safety, clipped the Moped keys that had a plastic card and rope tied to it to his waist

to prevent him losing it, and rushed out of the store in order to handle the first delivery order.

Then five minutes after Kawada left the store, another online order came in, and after that order—

“Thank you for your call. This is the MgRonalds in front of Hatagaya station, my name is Yusa!”

—they finally received their first phone order.

“Excuse me, may I ask for your address and phone number..... Alright, I understand, please allow me to confirm your order. Two Double Tsukimi Full Moon Burger Set Meals, yes, if it is at this time.....”

Emi, who simultaneously entered the information with practiced movements during the call, gave her instructions through the headphones after confirming the address of the previous delivery order.

“It’s the same direction. Sasazuka Fifth Area. They are within five minutes of each other.”

“Maa-kun, can I pass both the deliveries to you?”

“Understood.”

Kisaki made her judgement based on Emi’s information, Maou also responded affirmatively.

After quickly completing both the orders, Maou placed the orders inside the insulating bag based on the order.

“Do you know the location?”

“Yeah, I roughly know all the nearby roads here. This is the customer’s number right.”

After skimming over the order document Emi passed to him, he checked the detailed delivery area map stuck on the wall.

“Here huh, since it’s the Fifth Area, this means that number 11 in this order is at the bottom of the slope..... number 21 is..... alright, no problem. If something happens, I will contact you again.”

“I understand. Please be careful on the way.”

“.....Oh.”

Although he felt a really strong, peculiar feeling from Emi who sent him off with a normal smile and normal lines, because he was still working, Maou did not think about it too much, so he picked up the helmet used for deliveries and ran out of the store.

From the corner of his vision, he felt Akiko looking in his direction with a kind smile, but he still ignored this and walked out of the store and got on the new Honda GYRO ROOF.

After inserting the key and starting the engine, the Moped produced a loud engine sound, which he had already gotten used to in Ente Isla.

“We’re going, Red Dullahan I!”

Maou, who named the store Mopeds from I to III on his own accord, valiantly drove the vehicle onto the streets of Sasazuka and Hatagaya.

“This is less than predicted.”

“That’s right. Considering the number of reservations, it would be fine even if there is a little more, but this can’t be helped as well.”

Emi and Kisaki were standing at the first floor counter handling the usual tasks.

Although it was already past the peak lunch period, they only received ten delivery orders.

As they had prepared sufficiently beforehand, and the whole store was filled with motivation, this number was really a little disappointing.

“It’s not that good for gaps to appear during the first day, so let’s just treat today as getting used to the operations.”

Kisaki seemed to have adjusted her feelings.

“Especially since today has good weather. Although it’s still considered good weather as a beginning, according to the statistics, the number of orders will typically increase on days with bad weather. Most likely, when it rains while there aren’t that many people on duty, that is when the true test of our value will occur.”

Although it was good weather suited for a beginning, obtaining results which lacked any momentum and seemed like a waste of time was too ironic. However, it really cannot be helped.

At this moment, having gone out to deliver the tenth delivery, Maou returned to the store earlier than Kawada who went to deliver the ninth order.

“Welcome back, Maa-kun, thanks for the hard work.”

“Welcome back, do you have any comments to make?”

“It seemed to be a student gathering, and because I did not know who is the owner of that house, I have nothing much to say about the customer. However, for the road in front of the building, although it was narrow, the traffic flow was very heavy, let’s write that down then. Rather than riding to the front of the building, it would be safer to stop earlier and walk there instead.”

“I understand, I will record it.”

In order for everyone to share information about the delivery customers and geography of the delivery locations, all the comments about new delivery have to be manually entered, just as Emi prepared to type the information ‘Heavy traffic flow nearby, please take note of the parking’ into the computer.

The phone within the store rang, and the trio looked at one another.

“Thank you for your call. This is the MgRonalds in front of Hatagaya station, my name is Yusa.”

Emi rushed to the computer and responded in a practiced manner.

“Kawa-cchi hasn’t returned huh.”

“He’s going to the edge of the delivery area, where there are more small streets and one way streets.....”

Maou and Kisaki chatted while watching Emi’s side profile.

“.....Ugh.”

Sensing that Emi seemed to have sucked in a breath, both of them looked towards Emi at the same time to check her situation. Emi, who had responded to customers with a smile which seemed to transmit to the other end of the phone line until now, was showing a stiff expression.

“.....Did we finally get a prank call?”

“I’m not sure.....”

Although they had not encountered any prank calls or realized that the location did not exist after arriving at the delivery location, just as the both of them thought that this might be their first trouble—

“.....Alright, I understand. Two Big Mac Meals.....”

Emi actually started to process the order according to the normal process, confusing Maou.

Thinking about it carefully, having previously worked at the customer service call center, it would be impossible for Emi to be shaken by just a prank call. If so, it was harder to understand why Emi would show that kind of surprised reaction. Irregardless, Emi still completed the order, and from the order slip, it was an order close to 5000 yen.

“Are you alright, Saemi. You look pale.”

Rather than reminding Emi of her attitude, Kisaki seemed to be more worried about Emi, but Emi shook her head vigorously and replied, “I’m alright. Maou-san, Sasazuka X Area.”

“O-oh.”

Even if she said she was fine, Emi’s voice was still very stiff, could it be that the person on the phone said something strange to her?

After Emi sighed with relief, she said in a soft voice which only Maou could hear.

“I’m really alright, there’s no need to worry.”

“Emi.....”

“I finally obtained Kisasi’s acknowledgement, I need to conquer something of this standard with a smile. Sorry for not being mature enough yet.”

“No, it’s really fine..... hm?”

Emi passed the order to Maou.

Maou checked the delivery address and phone number on reflex, and his eyes widened in surprise.

Seeing the address, Maou knew why Emi would show that kind of expression.

“Hey, this is.....”

“It’s work, okay.”

Emi, who knew what Maou was going to say next, shook her head and stopped him.

“Maa-kun, the order is ready. Hurry and deliver it.”

“Ah, a-alright.”

Kisaki’s voice caused Maou to snap back to his senses.

“Be careful.”

Those words which Emi said before Maou set off, which area was she referring to?

Maou got on Red Dullahan I, secured the clasp on the helmet, and started the engine with a stern expression.

The location of the eleventh delivery, was Room 101 of Villa Rosa Sasazuka.

Even if it was Maou, he could not show a smile even when setting off.

“Who made that call?”

Although it could be deduced from Emi's expression, looking at it from a nice angle, the one would called should be Emi's father who officially lived there, Nord Justina, However, if it was him, Emi should not have showed that stiff expression.

“Sigh, thinking about it normally, it should be Lailah. Damn it, we were set up.”

Like this, it did not count as going to Maou's workplace or going to his home.

As long as Maou and Emi were still employees of MgRonalds, they would have to respond to delivery requests from the 'customer.'

And Villa Rosa Sasazuka was within the delivery area of the store in front of Hatagaya station.

“Oh, so this is a one-way street.”

Even if it was a road he would normally pass by when walking or riding a bike, after changing to a Moped, the scenery looked very different.

After riding for a slighter longer distance than when compared to the distance when going to work to reach the ‘delivery location,’ although it should be the location Maou was most familiar with in Japan, it felt strangely unfamiliar this time.

“Demon King-sama? Is something wrong?”

Ashiya, who happened to walk down the public staircase at this moment, got a shock when he noticed Maou appear on a Moped.

“Could it be that you forgot something?”

“It’s work.”

In order to meet with the ‘customer,’ Maou took off his helmet, and pointed to the boot at the back of the Moped.

“The customer is ‘Satou-san’ in Room 101.”

“T-that is.....”

Ashiya also immediately noticed the motive hidden behind this order.

“Damn angel! Actually calling Demon King-sama cover with just a call, there should be a limit to rudeness!”

“Sigh, although I was really called over with one phone call, but it is work as long as I am wearing this uniform, we cannot speak badly of the customer outside as well, so just be understanding.”

“T-then, please allow us to help as well.....”

“Like I said, I am just delivering burgers, why would I need any help. I just have to deliver the products to the customer, collect the money and return like just the previous few times today. That is all. You should act according to your agreement as well. Alright then, it’s almost ten minutes since I left the store. I need to deliver the products to the customer while they’re still hot.”

“Demon King-sama..... ugh..... shouldn’t have kept humans or angels by your side after all..... Demon King-sama, please be careful of any tricks they might pull!”

“So as I said I am just here to deliver burgers..... forget it, if you’re worried, then stay here and watch. It’ll be fine, uh-hm.”

Maou let the agitated Ashiya be on standby and after clearing his throat, he pressed the doorbell to Room 101 without any hesitation.

“Thank you for waiting, MgRonalds Happy Delivery.”

After Maou leaned forward and called out with a business like attitude—

“Oh, welcome.”

Unexpectedly, the one who answered the door was Nord Justina.

Maou, who originally thought that Lailah or Gabriel would come out instead, felt a little disappointed.

“Thank you for waiting, first is the drinks. Then this is the Big Mac Meal with fries. They’re hot, so please be careful.”

“.....I thought someone else would come, or have the delivery rejected.”

“As long as the conditions for delivery are met, we will not reject it.”

Chatting a bit with the delivery customers was also considered as part of the job.

When they first met, the stiffness of Nord's Japanese was almost the same as Acies, but right now he had improved until almost no strangeness could be detected.

It was not known if it was because Nord had more opportunities to converse in Japanese after reuniting with Emi or if it was because he had gone through some kind of acceleration method after reuniting with Lailah.

As Maou thought about these things, he also glanced to see if there was anyone else other than Nord on the other side of the door. Room 101 was very dark and it was hard to determine the situation inside.

“.....May I know if there are any issues with the order?”

“There's none, thank you.”

“You're too kind. Then it would be 4,530 yen.”

There was nothing suspicious about the 5000 yen Nord pulled out. Maou took out the change from his small change pouch, and handed it to Nord together with the receipt and the order slip.

“Thank you for your patronage. We hope you hear from you again.”

“Yeah.”

Until the end, what happened was not much different from the other delivery locations, so Maou prepared to end the conversation.

“Ah, yes.”

Just as Maou quickly kept his insulated delivery bag and prepared to leave.

“Maou-san.”

“.....Yes?”

Maou only turned his head and replied.

Nord’s expression was still as calm as usual.

“I want to ask something about this flyer.”

“.....Yes, please go ahead.”

Although it can be seen from the corner of his vision that Ashiya had anxiously looked over, after Maou turned towards Nord again, he was asked an unexpected question.

“It says that they are hiring employees, are they still lacking people?”

“.....?”

Maou frowned, what was Nord planning, could it be that he planned to apply for work at the McRonalds in front of Hatagaya station?

“I have been delivering newspapers for a long time, so I am very confident about road conditions. In addition, I would be able to get a Moped license quickly. What do you think?”

Thinking about it, the first time Maou met Nord, it was on the bus towards the Driving Centre, when he was thinking about these things, Maou replied while choosing his words carefully,

“We should still be hiring employees, please ask at the store first, then look for Shop Manager Kisaki for confirmation.”

“I see, I understand now, sorry for stopping you.”

“Then, I’ll be taking my leave. Thank you for your patronage.”

This time, Nord really ended the conversation, and closed the door after bowing lightly.

Although he did not decrease his wariness towards his surroundings even when he was ‘working,’ forget about Lailah or Gabriel, Maou did not even feel the presence of Shiba or Amane.

“D-Demon King-sama.”

Immediately after that, Ashiya ran over.

“This situation is called being ensnared by a fox right. In the end, nothing happened at all.”

“But at the end he seemed to have mentioned the recruiting of employees.”

“If he really came to apply, things would probably become very troublesome..... Honestly, we can only leave it to Kisaki-san to judge this, it’s not something I should interfere in..... no, he probably knew that I cannot tell lies when I am working, but what can he do even if he asked me about work related affairs?”

If Nord also planned to apply to be an employee at the McRonalds in front of Hatagaya station, then his relationship with Emi would be a concern. Ignoring the matters related to Lailah at the moment, Emi still admired Nord as her father, so this might become an opportunity for them to speak. But irregardless, these things had nothing to do with Maou at all. If Nord currently did not have a license, even if he applied immediately, it was highly likely that he would not be hired.

“Sigh. Forget it, I’m still working now after all.”

“Demon King-sama, how about I interrogate him.....”

“Stop that. If conflicts occur between the residents, the Landlady would rush over immediately.”

“.....Ugh.”

Ashiya gritted his teeth in frustration, but Maou who had advised him also felt an indescribable strange feeling.

“It feels like I am slowly falling into someone else’s trap.”

“But Demon King-sama, no matter what they do, we just have to act like we do not know what we have done so far right? As long as we do not take any actions which are beneficial to them, that would be fine.”

“Sigh, that is correct.”

Maou nodded and returned to Red Dullahan I to put on his helmet.

“Do you want to try ordering as well? As long as you use my number, it would be treated as a delivery order.”

“My apologies, I have already prepared the ingredients for tomorrow’s lunch.”

“Yeah, I understand. But I say, don’t allow Emi to infiltrate our kitchen like before. It’s bad for the heart.”

When he recalled what happened that night, Maou showed an empty gaze.

“My deepest apologies. I never expected that she would take the opportunity after we have slept to commit such an atrocity. Actually allowing Emilia to touch our rice, this is really the biggest miscalculation I have committed in my life.....”

“Atrocity..... no, Although the shape isn’t that nice, the taste was very normal. And it wasn’t poisoned.”

“That’s why it’s strange, Emilia actually made rice balls for Demon King-sama, I can’t tell what she’s planning at all.”

“Some serious malfunction probably occurred.”

Maou did not tell anyone about what happened that night, and Emi probably did not tell either.

“Sigh, no troubles have occurred since that day. For what happened today, let’s just treat it as Nord suddenly wanting to eat MgRonalds. Then it’s about time I return.”

“Ah, alright, I understand, my apologies for keeping you back. Please be careful on the road.”

Ashiya respectfully sent Maou off, and Maou left Villa Rosa Sasazuka just like this.

On the way back to the store, Maou thought back on what happened in the past week.

In fact, ever since Emi and Chiho were attacked by someone in the underground metro, no obvious incidents had occurred.

Although Emi's 'serious malfunction' was considered a serious incident from Maou's point of view, it was lucky that what happened that night had not been discovered by Alas=Ramus and Acies.

Emerada stayed together with Emi in Eifuku just like before, and Shiba and Amane had not done anything special.

The incident which happened on the day of the train fault seemed to have dealt a heavy blow to Lailah. Other than seeing her come to the apartment once two days after Emi had a 'serious malfunction,' Maou had not seen her after that.

During that time, her hair colour was still purple, but Maou did not want to know the reason or where she was currently living.

"Being able to safely go through every day is the most important."

Amongst the noisy sounds of the engine, Maou mumbled this softly.

When Maou returned to the store after a short while, he noticed that Emi and Chiho, who just reported to work, were waiting for him with worried expressions.

"Maou-san."

Chiho rushed over and looked up towards Maou's face.

“Are you alright? I heard from Yusa-san that you delivered to Room 101.”

“What business did my father have with you?”

Emi also asked this in an imposing manner.

“Uh, about that.....”

Maou roughly summarized what had happened at Villa Rosa Sasazuka.

“Simply put, other than Nord asking me about working, there wasn't anything particularly strange. I was prepared to be surrounded by Lailah and Gabriel and not being able to return. Emi, was the call you received from Nord?”

“.....Yeah.”

“But your expression was really imposing. I became so wary because your expression was really exaggerated.”

“You better clarify what you mean by an exaggerated expression!”

After Emi complained about Maou’s phrasing, she spoke in a troubled manner, “I just thought that he had ordered too much for one person’s share, so I thought that Lailah was definitely there. Then my tone just became stiff without me realizing it.....”

“That amount is really rather exaggerated.”

Based on the average spending of McDonalds customers, 4,530 yen is considered a very high number.

Even Sarel, who came every day before to buy his three meals to get into Kiseki’s good books, only spent around 3,000 yen every time he ordered.

“And it was all meal sets, it was probably around seven portions.”

As the price of delivery included the transport fee, the amount Nord spent on the orders alone should be around 4,200 yen.

“He’s not Acies, can Nord eat so much by himself?”

“Perhaps he planned to eat together with Acies-chan.”

“That’s hard to say. Acies would probably not want to go to that room where an angel might go to, right?”

“But, isn’t she staying at Shiba-san’s house together with Gabriel?”

“That could be because of the Landlady’s morals or ability..... then again, Acies seemed to have made Suzuki Rika pay for a very expensive dinner, did you hear her say anything?”

“What happened? I didn’t hear about it?”

Once Emi heard Rika’s name, she asked with a stony face.

“She helped Acies pay for 40 ala carte hamburgers and 4 cups of drinks.”

This number 40 stunned Chiho and Emi.

“I have to apologise to her later..... I didn’t want to involve Rika into Ente Isla’s conflict in the first place.”

“It’s too late to say that right now isn’t it, and those forty hamburgers cannot be considered as a loss from the Ente Isla conflict, that’s debatable right?”

“Ahaha. But as expected of Acies-chan. I can’t imagine what forty is like.”

Once they started talking about Acies, the originally tense atmosphere started to dissipate.

“Sigh, in the end, although I was so wary, nothing happened. It’s about time to return to work.”

“Alright!”

“That’s true..... ah!”

Without even finishing her sentence, a ringing sound was heard from Emi’s headphones, she frantically rushed toward the computer used to enter the data for the deliveries.

“Thank you for waiting. This is the MgRonalds in front of Hatagaya..... wah!”

Emi, who was still speaking, flinched as if she was frightened by something.

Then she looked towards Maou and Chiho unhappily, then reluctantly returned her focus to the voice within the headphones.

“.....Yes, yes, we’re the ones in your care instead, yes.....”

““In your care?””

Chiho, who could not guess who Emi was speaking to, exchanges a glance with Maou.

“Yes, that’s true. But, honestly speaking, adding the transport fee even with this distance is really not worth it, it would be better for you to come to the store directly.....ah, it’s alright, you say..... I understand..... eh? Choosing the delivery personnel? Erhm, our store does not carry out the practice of picking individuals, we might need some time to confirm this, can you wait for a while, excuse me.”

Emi put the call on hold with an extremely fatigued expression, and changed her headphones to the wireless communication within the store.

“Kisaki-san, Shop Manager Sarue from the Sentucky opposite called.”

““Eh?””

Maou and Chiho shouted simultaneously when hearing Emi’s voice from the headphones. Even when speaking of the devil, there should be a limit to that.

“.....Sarue huh, what does he want?”

Kisaki, who was currently at the second floor MdCafe because Maou just went out for the delivery, asked this with a confused tone.

“Erhm..... he wants a delivery.”

“Seriously?”

Kisaki asked in surprise, and not just Maou and Chiho, the same question was within the hearts of all the employees. Other shops in the same industry that could be reached in less than ten seconds walk could also logically be considered customers within the delivery area.

“And then? If the other party is willing to pay the transport fee for this distance, then it’s not much problem, but since Saemi is specially asking me about this, could it be that he wanted me to deliver it over?”

“.....That’s right.”

“.....Sighhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.”

All of the employees nervously listened to Kisaki’s long sigh.

“It can’t be helped, I’ll just treat it as greeting him because we have introduced a new service, since the opposite also belongs to the same shopping street, then it would also be considered potential customers..... although it would normally be impossible.”

It was natural to say that.

“Tell Sarue..... no, tell the customer I will go over. And has Maa-kun returned?”

“Ah, yes!”

Maou, who was suddenly called, could not help but shout directly towards the second floor.

“Alright, then I’ll leave the second floor to you and Chi-chan.”

““““Understood.””””

Maou, Chiho, and Emi said this in unison.

“Thank you for the wait. Kisasi-san will go over, let me confirm the order..... e-erhm, I’m sorry, please order an amount which Kisasi-san can carry alone.”

Sariel must have been head over heels in happiness on the other end of the phone.

Emi entered the quantity of the order while nodding at the phone, causing the total amount to climb.

“Does that guy want me to collapse under the weight of hamburgers and cola?”

Kisaki, who came down from the second floor, hung her head after seeing the order.

As a result, the amount of the order came close to 10,000 yen, and an estimated 20 minutes was needed to make the delivery even at such a close distance.

“Sigh, there is already someone who can finish that amount, it doesn’t seem that strange.”

“I hope Sariel-san doesn’t turn fat again..... does he really plan to eat that much alone?”

“No matter what, he probably won’t go far as to force the employees of Sentucky to eat MgRonaldds Meals. That kind of power harassment would be too unexpected.”

Only this time, Sariel’s usual actions opened up some leeway in Maou’s heart.

The first day the MgRonaldds in front of Hatagaya station pushed out the delivery service ended in what could be considered an extremely stable situation. The total number of delivery orders numbered to thirty. Including Nord and Sariel’s portions, twelve of them were made through calls, showing that Kisasi’s proposition was correct.

A round trip for the delivery requires twenty minutes, for the week after, they would probably allocate manpower based on the data for the first day.

The difficulties which they would face in the future should be bad weather, and what would need to be done on the days Maou, Kawada, and Emi, who performed the core of the work during the first day, did not have any shifts arranged.

“Ah..... I don’t know how to say this, but continuously doing something you’re not used to is really tiring huh.”

“For me, because I have not picked up calls for a long time, my shoulders are aching because I was too tense.”

Maou and Emi, who completed their closing up duties, stretched together in the middle of the quiet shopping street.

“It’s been a long time since I saw so many people at this time. Sigh, but once we don’t have Kouta, the manpower would probably become very tight after that.”

“Kouta refers to Nakayama-san right? Is he resigning?”

Although they knew that the high school student Chiho had got off work at 10pm, because it was their first time starting the delivery service today, the shifts of Kisaki and Maou, Kawada, Akiko, Emi, and Nakayama Koutarou, who recently left the store for job hunting, were all arranged to end at thirty minutes before the closing time when orders will not be taken, which would be 11:30 pm.

“He’s going to look for permanent employment. We can’t always ask young people who have a future to not have a job and always work part time right. Even so, he is someone who had worked hard together with me since I joined until now. He’s really reliable during shifts, so everyone probably feels that not having Kouta is a huge loss.”

“Then how about Kawada-san? I remember that they’re the same age.”

“Kawa-cchi is going to take over his family business, so he will not resign during the academic year. I do feel that he can walk on other paths..... then, be careful on your way home..... hey?”

Just as Maou planned to push Dullahan II out from the parking lot—

“What are you doing?”

Emi had grabbed the corner of his bag, causing Maou to stop with a stony expression.

“I am going to Bell’s room to fetch Alas=Ramus, so let’s go home together.”

“.....What, is your malfunction relapsing again?”

Even if Maou showed an unhappy expression with all his might, Emi looked like she was not affected by that at all.

“Seeing both of us go back together, Alas=Ramus would be happy too right.”

What’s wrong with Emi recently?

This was no longer as simple as the softening of her attitude.

Ever since that terrifying night, Emi seemed to have changed and started to show various expressions in front of Maou. These few days, Maou had not seen Emi show a high and mighty attitude towards him.

Even when she came to the apartment in the morning to hand Alas=Ramus over to Suzuno's care, she had showed an especially happy expression and attitude, causing the members of the Demon Army to feel very puzzled.

He did not know if Chiho had sensed the change in Emi.

Chiho, who had always hoped for Emi and Maou to get along, was probably anxious to see Emi reach out on her own accord.

But to Maou, because he did not know Emi's reason or turning point for reaching out on her own, he really could not actively compromise with Emi and shorten their distance like what happened with Suzuno in Ente Isla.

Basically, ignoring these miscellaneous reasons, the Emi who wants to go home together with Maou was not Emi at all.

“She should already be asleep at this time right..... hm?”

Maou look out his phone in a depressed manner, then noticed that the screen on the back was showing that it had received a new message.

“It’s Chi-chan and..... who? Who sent this.”

That message came from a mail address which Maou had never saved before.

The contents were only one sentence.

“Please come home immediately after finishing work.”

It was that kind of sentence.

“Hey, Emi, this message seemed to have been sent to you at the same time.”

“I know, I just saw it.”

Emi also nodded with a stony expression.

“Do you have any idea?”

“I don’t know, although I don’t know.....”

Maou kept having a feeling that he seemed to have seen this unsaved mail address somewhere before.

Although it was something which happened long ago, he had also received this message together with Chiho's message at the same time.

"Sigh, there shouldn't be that many people who would send this kind of message to you and me."

"That's true."

".....Are you alright?"

Maou looked towards Emi, who kept her phone into her bag with a complex expression, and asked this.

He was worried if Emi had enough margin to confront the sender who was very likely to be waiting at the apartment.

"Don't worry, I don't plan to have you see that pathetic appearance anymore."

Although it felt a little forced, Emi still nodded determinedly.

“If a ridiculous development is waiting for us, I really will not let them off this time.”

“Don’t force yourself.”

“Oh my, I never thought that you would also say such kind words. Don’t you not say these words to weak people?”

“Don’t nitpick my choices of words, I’m just afraid that you won’t be able to get up after a fall and give me trouble.”

Faced with Emi’s determined response, Maou replied with a smirk.

“Although we do not know who the other party is, let’s head back leisurely. Emi, I’m going to compromise this time. Let’s slowly walk back together.”

“Good idea. Should we buy some Oden at a convenience store on the way?”

Having a conversation which did not sound like one between a Demon King and a Hero, no, not like one between Maou and Emi, the two of them walked in the direction of Villa Rosa Sasazuka.

Listening to rubbing of the chains of Dullahan II, Emi looked up and said, “Then again, what did Chiho-chan’s message say? I didn’t receive it.”

“It seemed to be the same contents.”

“Eh?”

Maou did not turn towards the surprised Emi and said while looking straight ahead,

“She appears to be waiting for us at the apartment.”

“Hey hey, this is really a grand welcome.”

The people at the front yard of Villa Rosa Sasazuka meeting Maou and Emi returning were Chiho, Ashiya, Suzuno, Emerada, Amane, Acies, Alas=Ramus who was being carried by Acies, Gabriel, Nord and Shiba.

Although only Urushihara was the only one who escaped to the corner of the apartment like he was afraid of Shiba, most of the people who were connected to Villa Rosa Sasazuka and gathered here.

“Chi-chan, is it alright for you to be here this late?”

“I asked Sasaki-san to come.”

“.....It’s you, Landlady-san?”

Why did Shiba specially ask Chiho to come over?

“You don’t have to worry about the matters with her family, under Mi-chan’s directions, I have already arranged things such that Sasaki Chiho would not be scolded.”

“If something happens to Chi-chan’s parents afterwards, I will kill you, Gabriel.”

Acies, staying next to Amane, glared towards Gabriel who showed a completely frivolous attitude.

“Landlady-san, did you send that message?”

“That’s right, I also sent a similar message to Yusa-san.”

“I don’t remember telling you my mail address, and.....”

Maou glared at Shiba with narrowed eyes.

“A long time ago, you had sent me a message once before right?”

“That is correct.” Shiba answered shortly.

When Urushihara was not at Sasazuka, and Chiho had not known the truth about Maou and the others yet, Maou had received a mysterious warning message before.

The contents mainly said that other commotions will continue to happen afterwards.....

“Sasaki Chiho-san seems to be able to use Idea Link with her mobile phone as a medium, I just did something similar, although I had already established contact with the other Sephirah at that time, nobody else had leeway to help handle this and I had to monitor the whole of Japan by myself, so I had no choice but to use this method.”

“This is under the situation which you knew that we came from Ente Isla right?”

Maou sighed lightly.

This meant that Shiba had started pursuing after the existences behind Maou and Emi since such a long time ago.

“Then, why are you welcoming us so grandly.”

“The situation has changed.”

Amane was the one who replied.

“Aunt Mi-chan and I are no longer able to stand on Maou-kun’s side in a one-sided manner.”

“What is going on?”

“You will know once you enter.”

Amane pointed towards Room 101.

“We need to ask Maou-kun and Yusa-chan, the two of you, to go hear her out.”

“If we reject it?”

“Then Aunt Mi-chan and I will try our best to gather all of our family members and mercilessly chase all of you who might cause trouble to Earth back to Ente Isla.”

Amane’s tone was serious.

“On the contrary, as long as the two of you are willing to tolerate sleeping a little later and enter Room 101 to hear her out, we will not do anything. Sigh, just treat it as the renewal date of the rental contract.”

“You’re the ones who are doing all the talking.”

Maou frowned, and replied with a shrug.

“We just have to listen right?”

“Correct. Is that right, Aunt?”

“Yeah.”

Shiba nodded in response to Amane’s question.

“She is also carrying the world on her back in her own way, she should not make any more mistakes this time.”

“Going down the wrong path even when carrying a heavy burden, I don’t dare to sing her praises at all.”

After Maou mumbled this to himself, he tapped the shoulder of Emi who was beside him.

“We’re going.”

“.....Yeah.”

Although Emi had a stony expression, the danger she had emitted in Urushihara’s hospital room could no longer be felt.

“Maou-san, Yusa-san.”

“Demon King-sama, please be careful.”

“Treat it as a plea from me, do not let the situation develop to the point that I have to work okay.”

“Demon King, Emilia, in case anything goes against what is in your heart, stop listening.”

Chiho, Ashiya, Urushihara, and Suzuno, spoke to the both of them respectively.

“Papa.....”

Alas=Ramus, being carried by Suzuno, said something strange in the end.

“You can’t..... scold people okay?”

What was Alas=Ramus so afraid of?

Although Alas=Ramus should have already understood that Emi had shown a tough attitude towards Lailah, she did not seem to be worried about that.

Anyway, as long as they open that door, they would understand everything.

Maou grabbed the doorknob of Room 101 which he had just saw in the morning, and noticed that the lights were turned on after he opened the door.

Other than that—

“Wha.....”

“This, this is.....”

The scene which appeared there was not what Maou and Emi expected at all.

“I’m sorry for calling both of you over at such a late time, please come in and sit first.”

Maou and Emi did not listen to Lailah’s instructions and only stood at the porch in a stunned manner.

They did guess that Lailah was waiting in Room 101, even if her hair was still purple, that was nothing to be concerned about.

The problem was with the young boy who was sleeping on the futon next to Lailah.

Maou and Emi both recognized the young boy who had a streak of red hair amongst his black hair.

But the appearance of that young boy was very different from what they remembered.

His skin colour had turned dark brown.

That was not the traces of being tanned by the sun. Like metal which had been submerged in water for a long time, a layer of what looked like rust enveloped his whole body.

The only area with the same skin colour which they remembered was the right arm not covered by the futon.

“Iron.....?”

Maou called out the name of the young boy who was sleeping in the futon.

The personification of the ‘Geburah’ Sephirah, Iron.

The first time Maou saw him was when the Malebranche Chieftain appeared and had brought him along, after that Ashiya had also seen Raguel and Camael commanding him.

But when Maou was fighting with the angels in Afashan, he had not seen any sign of Iron, and after defeating the angels, no one knew about his whereabouts at all.

“Amane-san and Shiba-san found him this afternoon.”

Lailah’s words caused Maou to survey Room 101 like he had realized something, and in the corner of the room, Maou found the empty MgRonalds paper bags which he had brought over in the afternoon, which had been tied together and thrown in a garbage bag.

“That’s right. I asked that person to help to order food, that was for this child to eat.”

“He looks very weak, you actually allowed a child in this state to eat fast food?”

It was not strange for Maou to sound reproachful, but Lailah’s expression was not particularly shaken.

“Acies and Alas=Ramus like to eat it a lot. In fact, both of them recommend this a lot, so since the children of the Sephirah have said so, I thought that there should be no problems.”

“Even so, the effects on the body after eating so much.....”

“And he isn’t weak. Although he did lose physical strength by fighting with Amane-san, the reason for his current suffering is closer to eating too much. Because this child ate that amount all by himself.”

““Eh?””

At this, Maou and Emi, who knew how much Nord ordered, also let out a sound of surprise at the same time.

“Are all the Sephirah huge eaters? Could it be that in the future, Alas=Ramus will also.....”

“Such, such a thing would not happen! And that isn’t the important thing right now! What business do you have with us?”

Even if they were a little shaken while thinking about Alas=Ramus’s future, Emi still shouted in order to interrupt the shocked Maou.

“We still have to work tomorrow, if you have something to say, then say it quickly in a simple manner.”

Lailah seemed to have been shaken by Emi’s stern tone and nodded with an agitated expression.

“When talking about me, it is unavoidable to talk about this child..... Emilia.”

Lailah called out to her daughter in a slightly raspy, weak voice.

“Don’t say my name so casually.”

The daughter who sensitively felt that wavering emotion, interrupted her mother.

After Lailah sighed in a rather lonely manner, she lightly stroked Iron’s hair.

“The true identity of the black shadow who attacked the train on the Fukutoshin Line, which you and Sasaki Chiho-san were on, is this child.”

““!””

Maou and Emi sucked in a breath at the same time.

“Satan, this child ran away when you solved the commotion at Afashan because he did not want to get into a conflict with Alas=Ramus. Although this child decided to follow the angels on his own, he could not accept fighting against his Sephirah comrades. So he ran away. Even if it’s not many, there are still a few people who knew about this child in Japan.”

“That is so pitiful. Wasn’t he caught by the net which the Landlady set up?”

“Shiba-san quickly noticed the Iron had come here. However, Iron had already started to mutate, so it was very difficult to grasp his movements, Emilia, the black shadow you saw, was the state of Sephirah who have lost control after they lost sight of their duty to protect the world. The characteristic of metal wielded by Geburah was greatly expressed and the result was that he obtained a body hard enough to deflect the evolved Holy Sword, One Wing. Even when his consciousness was slowly being eroded by the metal characteristic, he was attracted by the reaction of the nearest Sephirah to him.”

“.....Then, this child who looks like a character from an American comic, how is he related to what you want to say?”

“Don’t you know?”

Lailah said with a sorrowful expression.

“Alas=Ramus and Acies may possibly end up like Iron.”

If it was these two people who understood the situation of the Sephirah in Ente Isla, they might have accepted Lailah’s words just like that, but Maou was not deceived.

“Emi and I have already become what is called ‘Yadorigi’ right? Even so, will Alas=Ramus and Acies still end up like Iron?”

“The existence of the Sephirah who have chosen a Yadorigi are more stable, however, once a Yadorigi is unable to use its skill, and the Yadorigi dies, those children will become alone again, in addition they might also leave the Yadorigi on their own, so it is not completely impossible to become like Iron. The knowledge which is able to guide these children has not been born in their world.”

Even if troublesome terms appeared, Maou still intentionally ignored this point and continued his questioning.

“.....So this is what you want to say right, if you do not wish for Alas=Ramus and the others to turn out like that, we will have to act according to what you say?”

Lailah shook her head at Maou’s defiant words.

“Although the way of expressing it is different, even if I wanted to say the completely same things before, I was still completely ignored by the both of you. Satan, Emilia. I had planned to make use of your love towards the ‘Yesod,’ and I thought that doing so was a natural thing to do.”

Lailah straightened her posture on the tatami, looked straight at both of them in the eyes and spoke.

“So, I don’t plan to ask you listen to me today. I just want to entrust ‘work’ to you.”

““Work?””

Lailah shook her head and took out a stack of A4 papers which were prepared beforehand.

“This is the overview of the business plan, the rules of the reward, and the draft of the contract.”

Maou and Emi finally looked at each other.

They could no longer feel the naïve atmosphere shown by Lailah that day in Urushihara’s hospital room as she sat formally in front of them with a determined expression.

“I just want to entrust one thing to you. That would be together with me, I hope that both of you can restore Ente Isla to the state it is supposed to be, I promise that I will pay all of you deserving rewards and not harm your current situation.”

“W-what are you saying?”

“Of course, you don’t have to promise me now. No, rather than that, I hope that all of you do not promise first, I wish to have a thorough negotiation with all of you until the conditions which will satisfy all of you are reached, of course, if all of you are still not content with the conditions which I have proposed in the end, it’s fine if you want to reject this.”

Maou and Emi knew very well that the determination within Lailah’s words was a huge difference compared to before.

“.....Then, if we choose to reject, what do you plan to do?”

Lailah shook her head in response to Emi’s trembling voice.

“If you’re unwilling to accept it, then there is no need to be concerned about what happens after. Although saying this sounds rather sarcastic, but neither of you should have the time to care about what happens after deciding not to sign a contract right.”

“I see, that is true.”

Unlike the wavering Emi, Maou nodded calmly and turned to look to the other side of the closed porch door.

“This is an idea Gabriel helped you to come up with right?”

“No.”

Lailah shook her head.

“It’s you, Satan.”

“Huh?”

“Eh?”

Not just Maou, even Emi was surprised by what Lailah said.

“I don’t remember what happened after I entered the underground metro tunnel, when I woke up, I was already here. Just when I wanted to get up because I was thirsty..... Satan, I heard your voice.”

Maou hung his head in a dejected manner.

“Since when.....”

“Since the part about the metal.”

Maou switched to grabbing his head with both hands.

“Up to that moment, I didn’t know how stupid or how shallow my actions were. Although both of you were already different from what I knew, and grown into outstanding adults, I was still intermittently relying on the fact that I lived longer and did not view the both of you as equal existences.”

Even if her voice and lips were shaking, Lailah still did not look away.

“If the both of you are willing to hear me out, based on your wishes, I will add on other conditions to the best of my ability, although I cannot help Satan conquer the worlds, as long as it is within the range of common sense.”

“What is considered within the range of common sense?”

“Isn’t it obvious?”

Lailah answered Emi nonchalantly.

“I will not hesitate even if I have to pay with this life.”

Emi sucked in a breath.

“Emilia, I did things to you which are unforgivable even as a person or as a mother, even if you killed me, it would compensate all the hardship with you have experienced in your life so far. Even so, if you want my life, I am still happy to oblige.”

“Ugh?”

Lailah proactively offered her own life, causing Emi to waver greatly, she only returned to her senses after Maou patted her back lightly. When Emi looked up, she saw Maou’s unhappy expression.

“Don’t take it so seriously, idiot.”

Maou comforted Emi.

“There is a limit to sophism. Don’t use those impossible assumptions to make the topic so exaggerated.”

“But, I am serious, I just wanted to express that I am already mentally prepared to that extent. When all of you really want me to die, I will definitely get rid of the many obstacles and uphold the agreement.”

Although it was phrased rather exaggeratedly, on the contrary, it meant she was willing to make huge compromises for ‘rewards within common sense’ below the value of life.

“Why are you willing to go so far.....”

“Because I want to protect Ente Isla, protect the future of the people who live in that beautiful words, that is half of the reason.”

Lailah’s answer was simple.

“The other half, is to punish those who have sinned.”

Maou did not ask who Lailah was referring to.

In place of that, he answered, “Alright.”

“Eh?”

“I have decided to enter negotiations with you first.”

“Seriously? Satan!”

“Demon King! What are you thinking?”

Lailah got up happily, as for Emi, she let out a reproachful tone and planned to grab the front of Maou's shirt.

“But before negotiating with you, I have to make some things clear first..... hey, Emi, let go.”

“I am asking what are you thinking.”

“So I am going to say it next right, let go. Hey, the shirt will warp like this.”

Emi pouted, listened to Maou and let go.

Even so, her gaze directed at Maou was still filled with disappointment.

“.....So in the end, everything's fine as long as you can get money? Although you..... understand my feelings.....”

“The reward is very important. So we're going to negotiate about the conditions next?”

Lailah seemed to be bothered by the gradual hardening of Emi's attitude, so she did not understand what Maou was saying and blinked in a confused manner.

“And Emi, I don’t know what misunderstanding you had. But the reason I said those words was not because I am standing on your side. I was just complaining to them because I was dissatisfied with the methods used by these people.”

“Ugh.....!”

Emi sucked in a breath, and her expression intermittently showed the fact that she had received a huge shock.

“Sa-Satan..... erhm, I know the relationship between Emilia and you is not good, but if the situation allows, I hope that the both of you could help me together..... so, don’t go so far.....”

At this moment, Lailah became flustered for the first time and wanted to make peace between Maou and Emi.

“You already knew so much, so why would you misunderstand at the end, Lailah?”

Maou interrupted Lailah.

“This person and I have an antagonistic relationship.”

“You don’t have to mention that kind of thing again right now!”

Although Maou was speaking to Lailah, Emi was the one who rebuked for unknown reasons, Maou intentionally stuck his fingers into his ears, and showed an attitude of ignoring Emi.

“So if you think that Emi will obediently follow after you successfully convinced me, then that’s a huge mistake.”

““Eh?””

Both mother and daughter said this in unison and showed surprised expressions.

But Maou ignored their confusion and continued to speak.

“As a prerequisite for my conditions with you, I will have to list out a few. Because these are more realistic than your life, I won’t allow you to reject them.”

Maou pointed upwards after he finished speaking.

“I am only willing to negotiate with you at Room 201 of Villa Rosa Sasazuka, and other than you and me, there must be one other person present,

and the people I would approve of being here, are only Ashiya, Urushihara, Chi-chan, and Acies who has merged with me, the last condition would be that for situations after than that, I will definitely not speak with you, unless you're willing to accept these three conditions, I will definitely not listen to you."

"Is-is that it? If it's like this, then I have no problems at all."

Lailah, who had thought that Satan would raise unreasonable requests, seemed a little disappointed after hearing the unexpectedly simple contents, Maou did not overlook this opening.

"Hey, Emi, you heard everything right."

"Eh?"



“That person agreed that she will only negotiate with me in Room 201 only, and only if Ashiya, Urushihara, Chi-chan, or Acies was present as well.”

“E-ehh.....”

“W-what? Are these conditions so hard to understand.....”

“Unless the conditions were satisfied, I will not hear you out at all. If you go against those conditions, we can treat it as if this had not happened. Would that be alright?”

“Of, of course. Something of this standard is nothing much at all.”

After confirming that Lailah had nodded with a sideways glance, Emi noticed that an extremely evil smile had appeared on Maou’s side profile.

After that, Maou opened his mouth and said something very unexpected.

“Emi, I accept your invitation from just now.”

““Huh?””

“From today onwards, let’s go home together every day.”

For a long time after that, only the sound of Iron's labored breathing was heard within Room 101.

“““Ehh?”””

The voices of Emi and three others outside, screamed at the same time.

“De-Demon King-sama! What is wrong with you?”

“Demon King? What happened to you? Are you serious? Could it be that you have a fever?”

“MaMaMaMaMaMaMaou-san said he wants to go hohohohome with YuYuYuYusa-san.”

Ashiya, Suzuno, and Chiho rushed in with an atmosphere like they wanted to break the door down.

“I say, this is still a room with an injured person..... and it’s Nord’s home.”

“Who cares about that! Compared to Nord Justina’s room door, the problem of Demon King-sama turning crazy is more important!”

“Ashiya, you actually said that in front of Landlady-san.....”

“Uh, although I did tell you before that you need to be concerned about Emilia, what happened to you these few days? Although you chased me and Rika-dono out of a store a few days ago, what kind of changes have occurred in your mental state?”

“Suzuno, you’ll just dig your own grave if you say too much. And those words will only drag me down, so just stop there.”

“I-I-I-I-I am very happy that the relationship between Maou-san and Yusa-san has become better, but, but, but rather than saying that I did not expect that the both of you would become so close, it’s more like I naively thought that it would not be possible, but-but-but Yusa-san is also an important friend, so if it’s Maou-san’s choice, then I.....”

“Chi-chan, Chi-chan, you’re overreacting. Calm down a little.”

When the trio were expressing different types of confusion—

“.....What..... did you say?”

Emi was in a daze while blushing furiously.

As Urushihara was the only person who did not join in the commotion, it was not known whether it was because acting this way matched his style, or because Urushihara was the only one who understood Maou's real intentions. No, that should have been impossible.

Anyhow, Maou patted the shoulder of Chiho, whose facial expressions were constantly changing, and whispered in her ear, "The working shift timetable."

"I..... I..... eh?"

"The shift timetable, try recalling it."

"The shift timetable, the shift timetable..... the shift timetable refers to.....?"

"The shift timetable..... huh?"

Chiho recalled the working shift timetable of the MgRonalds in front of Hatagaya station, but for unknown reasons, Ashiya cried out after he figured out Maou's intentions earlier than Chiho.

“The working days of Demon King-sama and Emilia are overlapping.”

“Eh..... ah!”

Before rebuking about why Ashiya knew the working shifts of Maou and Emi, or even that of the whole McDonalds store in front of Hatagaya station, after hearing this, Chiho also realized Maou’s intentions.

“Although the times which we report to work are definitely different, the times we go home are mostly the same. We also get the same off days. After all, the middle aged women lining up on weekend afternoons are very capable. Anyway, at least for this month the delivery situation will still be unstable on many days, so Emi and I are working on a very similar timetable.”

Using the time when Chiho was still stunned, Maou turned towards Lailah.

“If I hear your plans in situations outside of those conditions just now, then I will definitely not help you. And you have agreed as well, so at this point of time, I will not allow you to regret this.”

Lailah replayed the previous conversation in her head repeatedly.

“Eh, wait.....”

And found an important fact.

“P-please wait? With that, when would I be able to explain the situation to you?”

“I have a few days which I do not have any shifts. I will tell you which off days I have in advance, and you can come to Room 201 at any time you choose. Although Ashiya and Chi-chan are busy with many things, Urushihara will definitely be at home, Acies is also frequently idle at the Landlady’s house. As long as you come to my house when I am on my off days, I will be in a situation where I can hear you out.”

“I-I didn’t mean that, I didn’t want to ask you, erhm.....”

Lailah, who lost her cool, started to blush as well.

“If, if I have to comply with those conditions.....”

“Let me say this first, when I am working in the store, I don’t have that much time to listen to you speak, and Emi, Suzuno, and Alas=Ramus are not included within the list of the people who are allowed to be present.”

“W-wait, wait a moment, hey!”

“Demon King, are you.....”

Maou looked between the shaken Lailah and Emi.

Maou and Emi would not listen to Lailah when they are together. However, Maou and Emi would be together for long periods of time after that, and the conditions listed by Maou could not be met.

As long as Emi moved together with Maou, Lailah was unable to make contact with Emi.

If so, how was Lailah going to negotiate with Emi?

Other than at Urban Heights Eifuku, there were no other choices.

“Demon King, wait a moment, Demon King, but suddenly wanting me to do this.....”

“What’s wrong, Emi. Are you the type of weakling who would not be able to quarrel with your mother as long as I am not with you? Can you still be considered a Hero like this?”

“As-as-as if that is true! Why would I be unable to talk to Lailah once you’re not around! It’s impossible for that kind of thing to happen!”

“Then it’s fine right.”

“Of course it’s fine..... eh?”

“Whether both of you want to quarrel or discuss, choosing a place where I am not around is correct, you’re mother and daughter, right.”

Emi looked at Maou’s face in a stunned manner.

With this, Emi was unable to raise the condition of needing to have Maou present during the negotiations.

Rather than being unable to choose, it was more like just having that choice exist in her heart was enough for Emi to feel shocked.

“.....I will show you!”

“Emilia?”

“Can you do it?”

Lailah shouted out in surprise, Maou showed a provoking smile.

Red faced, Emi pointed her index finger towards Maou with force.

“I am the Hero! I don’t need to borrow your power at all. Something like negotiating, I can settle it alone, just you wait! Don’t look down on me!”

Then, she made that kind of declaration.

Although Emi did not plan to shorten her distance with Lailah, she did not want to be manipulated by Maou, when she came to her senses, she had already said all of this.

This was not the result of any thought process. It was all done on reflex.

But after seeing Emi’s expression when she said those brave words, Maou nodded in satisfaction for unknown reasons.

“That’s Emi after all. I’m reassured.”

After he said this, Maou left the stunned group behind and left Room 101.

Firstly, he asked Shiba who was waiting outside, “Is it alright to leave that kid in that room?”

“Lailah-san said she would be responsible for his care, I will also try my best to stay by his side.”

“That will be a huge help.”

After that, he turned to Emerada and spoke to her, “Whatever happens on your end already has nothing to do with me. Think of your own solutions.”

“Hohoho~ leave it to me~”

With a huge smile on her face, Emerada bowed her head towards Maou.

“I will support Emilia~~ to the best of my ability~~”

“I already told you all to solve it yourselves.”

Next was Acies, who was carrying Alas=Ramus.

“Visit occasionally, you’re quite free anyway. Emi would normally leave Alas=Ramus here as well.”

“Yeah.”

Acies pressed her lips together and nodded with force.

“Papa.....”

“Don’t worry. I am not angry with Iron. But Mama was hit really hard by Iron, after Iron wakes up, Alas=Ramus needs to properly tell him to apologise, okay?”

“.....Oh!”

Lastly, Maou spoke to Urushihara, who had leisurely stationed himself at the common staircase, “Hey, what’s for dinner tonight?”

“Ask Ashiya for that kind of thing.”

“You should at least employ your skill for remembering things, is that smell pork miso soup?”

“Asking although you know it already, seriously, you even made it sound like I am an idle person.”

“But you are an idle person.”

Maou shrugged and poked Urushihara’s forehead once.

“Sigh~ I have a bad feeling.”

“That’s right.”

Urushihara got up and followed behind Maou while mumbling unhappily.

“Maou, are you helping to create chances between Lailah and Emilia? Do you think that you would be able to distance yourself from trouble like that?”

“What.”

Maou looked back in surprise, Urushihara clasped both his hands behind his head, sighed and said, “If it becomes cramped later on, it will all be Maou’s fault.”

“Huh?”

Maou and Urushihara disappeared into the public corridor while speaking of things which lacked context.

“Sigh, since Aunt Mi-chan didn’t say anything, does that mean that the rental was renewed successfully?”

Amane yawned in a bored manner.

“Hm~ that was amazing~ hm. I didn’t predict this development, yeah.”

Gabriel showed a rare serious expression and mumbled in confusion.

“Such a difficult to understand man.....”

In a distracted manner, Nord listened to the door of Room 201 close.

Final Chapter

In the end, Maou and Emi still did not know anything.

They did not know what Lailah had secretly been doing until now, nor did they know for what purpose.

As for why Gabriel, who had been unpredictable until now, was standing on Lailah's side right now.

The children of the Sephirah could save Ente Isla, what did that mean as well?

The situation of the Tree of Life, which existed in the sealed up Heaven.

But at least the result, that there was an opportunity of negotiation between Maou and Lailah, brought about an obvious change.

“It's so cramped!”

“You're noisy, Urushihara. Be quieter when you eat.”

“And it's hot!”

“What are you saying, it’s already November now. I even think that it’s about the switch our clothes for the season.”

“Ashiya, Bell, both of you are intentionally ignoring what I’m trying to say right.”

““What do you mean?””

“You’re still asking me what I mean! What’s up with this number of people!!!”

Urushihara’s patience had finally reached its limit.

“Acies! Emerada Etuva! Lailah! Gabriel! Nord Justina! All of you go, home already! Why are you guys eating at the Demon Fortress as well? This room is really small! You should know that right?!”

“Urushihara-san! You just kicked the table! It caused the miso soup to spill out!”

“Sasaki Chiho, don’t you feel that this situation is problematic?”

“Of course I think it’s problematic!”

“Ohhh?”

Chiho’s unexpectedly strong reaction, caused Urushihara to back up on reflex.

“But..... but, it can’t be helped! I am also- I am also very envious! If possible, I even want to take Yusa-san’s place instead! I never thought, I never thought, Yusa-san would actually..... would actually become like this!”

“Chi-Chiho-chan, erhm, sorry, how should I say this, things are definitely not what you’re thinking.”

Emi, who was described by Chiho as ‘would actually become like this’ explained.

Having said brave words to Lailah and Maou, for unknown reasons, Emi was sitting next to Maou with a heavy expression, and guiltily holding the bowl.

“I know that!”

Chiho returned to her seat with an expression of not knowing whether to cry or laugh.

“I also frequently hope that the relationship between Maou-san and Yusa-san can improve! That feeling is genuine!”

Then she ate a few mouthfuls of rice in a self-defeating manner, in an abnormal situation, many grains of white rice were stuck on her face, and she shot a sharp gaze at the person sitting beside her.

“Lailah-san! More accurately, perhaps the person I should hate right now is you!”

“It-it seems like, erhm, I’m very sorry…….”

The archangel who had manipulated the history of Ente Isla and the Demon World from the shadows. Even though she was frightened by the hatred filled gaze of the high school girl, she still reached out for the pickled vegetables with her chopsticks.

“Forget it, isn’t eating together with everyone a happy thing! Let’s not keep glaring at each other. In order to smoothly integrate with everyone, I brought food over. See, it’s sweet and sour meatballs personally made by Mi-chan!”

Unexpectedly, unlike Lailah who came empty handed, Gabriel took out a huge airtight container from an embroidered patchwork bag.

Just like he said, it was stuffed with huge meat balls, adding a soft fragrance of sauce and sweet green peppers to the dinner table.

But because the man who brought new dishes to the table was bigger than anyone else, Urushihara mercilessly kicked the knee of Gabriel, who had sat cross legged on the floor.

“Your build is too huge, so it’s especially obstructive! Before discussing about whether you brought food or not, just everyone’s rice and miso soup has filled up the table! And please don’t bring ‘food personally made by the Landlady’ here! Do you want to my life and hair to become white?”

“Don’t say such rude things. This is what Mi-chan specifically wanted to bring after hearing that everyone is gathering. It seems like she used minced meat from premium Black Pigs from Kagoshima Prefecture, you know?”

“Urushihara, apologise to the Landlady and Gabriel.”

Once he heard ‘Black Pig,’ Ashiya actually snatched the airtight container from Gabriel’s hands, moved the contents to a plate and placed it inside the microwave.

“Hey, Maou! For the sake of premium ingredients, Ashiya betrayed the spirit of a Demon General? A military court session should be opened for that right!”

“Don’t worry, Lucifer! If there are any left, Em and I will be responsible for dealing with them!”

Acies at the side said even more maddening words, Urushihara grabbed his head and spoke, “I am not worried about that! And then again, both of you really eat too much!”

“Maou! You should also have more awareness as the master of the house, think of some ways to deal with these thick skinned people! Emilia as well! Because you did not hone your determination to carry things out, you have caused this room to become like a battlefield every day!”

“.....I have nothing to say.”

“.....Sorry. But.....”

Maou was quietly eating with a dark expression. Emi, sitting next to Maou in a snuggling manner, wanted to say something but stopped, her lips pursed.

“It’s alright, Emilia.”

Then Nord counselled Emi with a calm tone.

“Not being controlled by anyone, you decided on your own. I will respect yours and Lailah’s will to the best of my ability.”

“Father.....”

“Rather than her will, you should first respect the will of the occupants of this room!”

As if to fill in the gaps between people, a figure came to Urushihara’s side as he could not help but continue shouting.

“Lucifer. You need to sit down when eating, naughty!”

“I had enoughhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!”

Because he could not shout angrily at Alas=Ramus, Urushihara could only grab his own head this time.

Five days had passed since Iron was brought to Room 101, and during this period of time, Emi had only returned to her Eifuku apartment once, then continued to stay in Suzuno’s room.

Although Lailah also went together with her at that time, based on what Emerada said, the interactions between the both of them were very stiff, and it seemed like they had never successfully held a conversation.

Both parties had taken a huge blow at the first chance they had, so after that, forget about talking, Emi and Lailah did not even find any opportunities to quarrel or have conflicts, and when she came to her senses, Lailah had already lost the instant Emi had left Maou's side, and in order to guard against physical conflicts from occurring between Emi, Maou and Lailah, the others were forced to become alert personnel, and the result was this huge Demon Fortress gathering.

From Maou's point of view, he thought that when he was hearing Lailah out, Emi should clearly be separated from him, and the reason why he raised those conditions was mainly to avoid Emi having a serious malfunction because she was troubled about issues related to Lailah and acting in a way which would cause the people around them to misunderstand.

As long as Emi and Lailah were able to properly face each other and talk, although it was not to the point of reconciliation, it would at least bring about the dissipation of some sores. Maou had thought that Emi would regain her usual state, and did not expect that it would bring about this kind of result.

It could be said that Emi was not mentally prepared to be alone with Lailah at all.

It would be fine if it was just like that, as if she was hiding behind the conditions Maou raised to Lailah, every single day, other than at work, Emi seemed to stick on Maou's side.

If he knew things would turn out that way, the Emi who would make noise about fighting the Demon King, or killing the Demon King and causing trouble to her surroundings or coming over for surveillance was much better.

Staying compliantly by his side 24 hours a day, Maou did not know how to handle it at all.

Even if he wanted to use forceful methods to chase her away, when he thought carefully about it, he had never done this kind of thing in the past, so he did not even know how to use forceful methods.

Thanks to that, the Demon Fortress had recently been filled every day. Maou also had to withstand the subtle gazes of Kawada and Akiko, who had especially acute senses. Chiho's gaze filled with passion and Suzuno's cold gaze, as well as Ashiya's white eyes as he saw the rate of the decrease of the rice and Urushihara's complaints, all of this caused his emotions to turn heavy.

“Emi, you need to be responsible for what you say. Are you such a coward? Did you malfunction? So?”

“It, it’s nothing like that! I will properly..... talk..... with her! O-one day.....”

As long as he complained to Emi directly, she will always reply with ‘one day.’

“A-and, you’re not prepared to negotiate with Lailah either! Since you would go home with me after work, that means that you’re not ready to list the conditions you want to raise to Lailah, right.....”

“With regards to walking back to the apartment from the store, I don’t deny that I did have such considerations! But, I just did not expect that the Great Hero would actually want to mingle with demons after work and on off-days! Please go back already!”

Maou, who did not expect that someone would find fault with him with this unexpected reason, intentionally choose words which would make Emi angry and shouted at her, but Emi’s reaction exceeded Maou’s expectations even further.

“Ugh! What, it-it’s not like I like to be with you! It’s just that..... right now, it happens to be, erhm, rather inconvenient.”

Wrong, forget about being completely unexpected, Emi's reaction, which was so indecisive that it felt like she had fallen down on her own while walking and could not stand up again, caused the whole atmosphere to become chilly.

““““What kind of inconvenience is it.....””””

“W-wait a moment? Did you guys just say something in unison?”

““““Not at all.””””

Although it was not directed at them, Ashiya, Urushihara, and Suzuno still looked in random directions and replied coldly, as for Chiho—

“Although I hoped that Maou-san's and Yusa-san's relationship could become better, right now my wish is considered half fulfilled, but-but, why does it bother me so much..... even though I, don't want to be an annoying child, why can't I honestly feel happy about this situation..... it's really strange, Lailah-san.”

She was biting her chopsticks and continuously complaining to Lailah besides her in a volume which could not be heard by the others around her.

Maou, who was close to reaching his limit—

“I can’t relax at all.....”

He mumbled this subconsciously, but as if to counter this sentence—

“Me too, Demon King-sama.”

“Maou-san, I cannot relax either!”

“I did warn you properly before, you know? Hurry up and think of a way to deal with this situation!”

“Seriously, no matter what it is, there should be a limit.”

Not knowing if they were directed at Maou or Emi, Ashiya, Chiho, Urushihara and Suzuno consecutively said piercing words, until a certain someone gave the final blow.

“I am really sorry..... but, please, let me continue on like this for a while.....”

These soft, heartfelt words from Emi who was leaning against Maou’s side engulfed the whole table like lightning.

“Yu-YuYuYuYuYuYusa-san? Erhmmm? You mean, you mean thattttt?”

“Ohh, Emi is so bold! Shuuu——”

“Emilia..... putting it that way~~ is really too much~~”

“Please, treat this as a request from me, don’t bring more trouble to the Demon Fortress..... please!”

Chiho let out a scream and came close to fainting, Acies wanted to whistle, though she had not done before and failed, Emerada became expressionless, as for Maou, he almost dropped his chopsticks at bowl, and mumbled with a pale complexion.

“Papa and Mama, get along!”

Although Alas=Ramus was the only one who welcomed this situation, unfortunately even her cuteness was unable to dissipate the atmosphere in the room.

※

At this moment, in Room 101—

“I wonder if the ceiling will fall down.”

Amane, in charge of taking care of Iron, looked towards the ceiling with a serious expression as noises unlike the sounds of life was heard from above.

“Rather than peace in the far future, why don’t I choose today’s dinner instead? Then, what should I eat. I am the type of person who would not care about digging through the fridge belonging to others as long as I get permission.”

Rubbing her hands, Amane mercilessly opened Nord’s fridge and started to look for ingredients for dinner on her own.

Iron was groaning behind Amane, who was that kind of person. Whether he was having a nightmare, or if he was simply reacting to the noise upstairs, the answer might have to wait until he woke up to be revealed.

Author, Afterword – AND YOU –

Not just driving licenses, people would frequently be unhappy with the photo used on their identification documents, Wagahara had once contemplated why this would happen.

Especially Wagahara only took the identification documents photo after starting to wear spectacles, after spending a lot of money on the photos, not just the expression, just discovering that the spectacles within the photo were a little crooked was enough to depress me.

Of course, it was like that for my resume, and even my student pass and driving license, until this age—

“It’s not bad.”

I never had such thoughts. There was always some part which made me want to sigh.

When I was still acting, my mentor had once told me “There is nothing more boring than the acting performed by a person who is thinking that what they want to show fine acting skill.”

It means that the acting and the expressions need to contain complex emotions like that of everyday life to have the power to move the audience,

the expression of someone who is only thinking about 'showing a good side' does not have any charisma at all.

In other words, that would be when taking photos for identification documents, your mind is just thinking about showing a good side, so it will be impossible to take a photo which you are satisfied with.

Basically, even if you want to 'take a photo of a natural expression,' it will also be impossible to be successful. After all, the face on the identification documents photo, was originally 'an expression which had been embellished' to show other people.

In everyday life, I have never seen 'a natural expression' on anyone's identification document photo.

Since it is an embellished expression, I just have to take my photo with some kind of passion within my heart, after having this thought, although I was still dissatisfied with the photo on the driving license which I had recently changed, I was no longer depressed about the quality of my expression.

It is just that he, who received a new identification document in this volume, must have shown too much passion when taking the photo. That must be an expression which satisfies the format and is filled with energy. I wonder if there will be an illustration.

This Volume 12 of “Hataraku! Maou-sama!” is a story of when a group of people are working hard, thinking about how to sustain their lifestyle, and exploring how to be themselves when an external person did some things with an unknown purpose.

Wagahara had also worried about if I can properly repay all the things which all the readers have given me, as long as I can do this, I will definitely continue to write.

If we have the opportunity to meet again next volume, I will work hard to repay everyone for what I have received before.

Goodbye!



Credits

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